



# THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

*Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.*

**No. 31.**

*Price, Five Cents.*



"HANDS UP, PARDS, FOR I WANT YOU BOTH!" AND BUFFALO BILL COVERED THE TWO ROBBERS WITH HIS REVOLVERS IN EACH HAND.—(CHAPTER CXXXII.)





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## BUFFALO BILL'S VICTORIES.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

### CHAPTER CXXXI.

#### A FRUITLESS ERRAND—THE MASKED STRANGER.

Two men stood talking together in a frontier fort, watching from a distance the overland coach about to start upon its eastward run, and aware of the fact that it carried a lady passenger, young, very handsome and daring enough to risk the dangers of the trails, whether from Indians or road agents.

The two men were striking-looking personages, about the average height, splendidly formed, handsome as pictures, yet with faces of determination, pluck and will power.

One was dressed in the fatigue uniform of a surgeon of cavalry in the United States army, and wore the rank of a captain upon his shoulder straps.

The other was attired in buckskin leggings and jacket, top boots, broad sombrero, and wore his hair long.

The latter was William F. Cody, the army scout, then winning his great fame as Buffalo Bill.

The army officer was Surgeon Frank Powell, also known as the Surgeon Scout, and the two were devoted friends, pards in many a deadly trail.

Horseshoe Hal, the driver of the coach, seemed proud to have as a passenger a young and beautiful woman, and all at the fort knew, as he did, that she had visited the commandant to plead for a wicked brother, then a prisoner there under sentence of death for his many deeds as an outlaw.

In her pleading it was said that she had been unsuccessful, and her sad face indicated that this was so.

She had bravely met her brother, did all she could to cheer him, bade him good-by, and was going her way, a great sorrow at her heart.

As the coach rolled away Surgeon Frank Powell and Buffalo Bill were standing near the latter's quarters.

"Bill, she is really going," said the surgeon, as he saw Miss Ardell upon the box with Horseshoe Hal.

"So it seems, doc. What you said to her must have frightened her off."

"You mean about being aware that she came here to rescue the prisoner?"

"Yes."

"It may be."

"She is really, then, the sister of that outlaw?"

"Oh, yes; as there are no others in the secret, I



can tell you now that the miner, Deadshot, told me as much."

"Well, she is a brave, noble girl; but here she comes."

The coach rolled by just then, and both Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill raised their hats, a salutation which Miss Ardell returned with a very gracious bow.

They watched the coach until it left the stockade through the gateway and then Buffalo Bill said:

"Doc?"

"Yes, Bill."

"I am on the trail of knowledge."

"Well?"

"I wish to see what she is going to do."

"Miss Ardell?"

"Exactly."

"She can do nothing else than go East now, for Deadshot said he intended taking her with him."

"She may, and she may not go East."

"No one in the fort knows her, other than you and I, as Bonnie Bess, of Red Pocket, for she has guarded that secret, I am sure."

"Yes, wholly."

"Now she may go back to Red Pocket."

"Suppose she does?"

"She came here to rescue her brother beyond all doubt, and finding that you were aware of that fact, having recognized her, she has gone her way."

"Very wisely."

"That remains to be seen."

"What are you driving at, Bill?"

"Well, that woman idolizes that wicked brother of hers, and all the miners in Yellow Valley idolize her. Did she wish to make a dash and rescue her brother, she could get every man in the valley to follow her lead, so I am going to see just what her destination is."

"A good idea," responded Dr. Powell, and half an hour after Buffalo Bill rode away from the fort, following the trail of the stage coach.

"They is two dandies from 'wayback, miss."

Such had been Horseshoe Hal's comment regarding Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill as the coach rolled by them.

"Who are they?" innocently asked the girl.

"Ther one in fatigue uniform is Dr. Frank Powell, miss, better known as ther Surgeon Scout, for he's one of the best Injun fighters and trailers on ther

plains, and no man has had a more dangerous life than he has lived.

"He's a dead shot, and don't know no more what fear is than I does about preachin' ther gospil.

"Ther' ain't no squarer and better man in the Wild West than White Beaver, as the Injuns calls him, nor a better surgeon, scout and all-around man, either."

"You certainly give him a most delightful recommendation, Horseshoe Hal, but who is the one in buckskin and the broad sombrero who was talking to him?"

"*That are Buffalo Bill.*"

"Ah! I have heard of him, as I have also of the Surgeon Scout, for they are known everywhere, it seems, through their deeds."

"Yes, miss, they is, for a fact.

"Buffalo Bill is chief of scouts at the fort, and he is a man to tie to when one needs a friend.

"It was them two, if you'll pardon me for saying it, along with the miner from Red Pocket, thet captured Silk Sam and his gang, and stopped highway robbery on this trail."

"Then you think there will now be no more holding up of coaches on the Overland?"

"Not on ther trail I runs, miss, I'm thinking."

So on the coach went along its way, Horseshoe Hal delighted at exhibiting his skill as a driver and striving hard to keep Miss Ardell from dwelling upon the fact that she had parted with her brother forever.

Just as the coach drove down into Deep Brook, Horseshoe Hal said:

"I tells yer, miss, it's a comfort ter feel yer kin halt in thet stream ter water your horses and not be expecting a shot all ther time."

"Yes, for you have risked dangers enough to enjoy some sense of security now," was Miss Ardell's answer.

But hardly had the words been uttered when suddenly down the trail beyond, leading into the stream, rode a horseman.

He was dressed in black, but rode a snow-white horse, though all of his trappings were of sable hue.

The horseman was masked, and wore a black sombrero, but his hair fell in heavy waves upon his broad shoulders, concealing even his neck, while, as he wore gauntlet gloves, no one could have told from



his appearance, whether he was paleface, Indian, Chinese or negro.

"Hands up, Horseshoe Hal, for you carry a rich prize," cried the horseman, as he reached the water's edge, and leveled his rifle at the driver.

"Waal, I'll be eternally roasted, ef thet don't beat all, for I were jist sayin' ther trail were clear o' varmints like you."

"Silence! Hold on there, my pretty lady, for I'll send a bullet through your brain as quickly as I would shoot Horseshoe Hal, if you attempt to show your claws," sternly cried the highwayman.

This command was caused by seeing the action of the woman, for she had drawn toward her a small valise she had behind her upon the top of the coach, and in which she had a revolver, which had before rendered her good service.

Not expecting a hold-up, she had not kept the weapon near her.

There was something in the tone of the man that indicated his intention to be as good as his word, and she raised her hand from the satchel.

"Say, robber, if yer don't consider me rude, I'd like ter ask yer who yer be, for I thought ther old gang had been wiped out?"

"The old gang was, but I have come to hunt the trails, and I am here to stay.

"The lady is well fixed, as I happen to know, so I will trouble her for her money, and all else of value she may have with her.

"If she refuses, I will kill you, Horseshoe Hal, and hold her a captive until she pays far more than I can now rob her of.

"I hope you both understand the situation."

"I understand you is a thief I'd like ter get a rope onto once," growled the driver, while Bess said:

"Yes, I understand the situation perfectly, robber.

"You have power to rob me, and so I submit to your brute force only.

"I have with me considerable money, a thousand dollars, perhaps, and some jewelry, as you have said, and I will give all up if you demand it, but I would like to ask to keep a little money, and several trinkets, which, of little value to you, are most valuable to me from association. May I keep these and a hundred dollars in money?"

It would seem that few could resist this appeal, but the robber had the power and he meant to use it.

"Not a dollar, or anything of value shall you keep.

"I risk my life to rob, and I demand all, so give it up, or I draw trigger on Horseshoe Hal, and you are my captive.

"Come, no nonsense, so hand over your wealth," and the robber rode nearer to the coach.

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## CHAPTER CXXXII.

### DEADLY WORK.

The man who had halted the coach moved nearer to it, riding into the stream to do so.

The team of horses looked at him askance, as though appreciating the situation, while the face of Horseshoe Hal grew black with rage.

"Ter think I can't protect her," he muttered.

To have his fair passenger robbed of her money and jewels while in his keeping was a terrible thought to the driver.

Yet he was powerless to protect her, as the slightest resistance on his part meant instant death to him.

The road-agent, still covering the driver with his rifle, rode nearer to the coach.

"You will force me to give up all?" said Bess, in a voice that showed she was deeply moved.

"Every dollar and valuable," was the stern rejoinder.

"Then I suppose there is no help for me," and she opened the satchel and placed her hand within it.

"None to be hidden, my pretty miss, for I need all you have and more, too."

"Then take all I have to give!"

As the words were uttered the hand came quickly out of the satchel, it was thrust forward, and a sharp report followed.

With a cry of pain, the road-agent dropped his rifle into the stream, for his right arm was shattered, and then with a savage oath he dropped his left hand upon his revolver on his hip.

But quickly a second shot rang out, and unmindful of the plunging horses, which brought all of Horseshoe Hal's energies to bear to stop them from turning short around in the stream, the bullet was truly aimed, and the left arm dropped to his side, the weapon falling into the water.

"My God, miss, don't kill me!" cried the road-agent, and he wheeled his horse by a movement of his body and a word, to dash away.

"I hate to harm that beautiful animal, but he must



not escape," cried Bess, now thoroughly aroused, and for the third time her revolver was raised.

A quick glance along the barrel and the third shot rang out.

Although the horse was bounding up the hill at full speed, the aim was true, and the animal dropped upon his knees, stumbled and went down, throwing his rider hard.

"I'll catch him, miss, if you can hold the team," cried Horseshoe Hal, after giving vent to a wild yell of admiration for the girl's crack shooting and the success she had met with.

But as he spoke there came a rushing sound behind them, a plunge and a horseman was crossing the stream with mighty leaps.

"*Buffalo Bill!*" yelled Horseshoe Hal, wildly, and in an instant the scout had crossed the stream and was by the side of the wounded outlaw.

"Don't kill me, for I cannot resist," said the road-agent, faintly.

Snatching the mask from his face, Buffalo Bill said:

"Ah, I know that face.

"You are one of Silk Lasso Sam's band who escaped.

"Ho, Hal, you did some crack shooting here, even if you did not kill him."

"It wasn't me did it, Buffalo Bill," responded Hal, who had now driven up to the spot.

"Not you?"

"Nary."

"Who, then?"

"This young lady, and she knows how ter use a gun, says I."

"I did not wish to kill him, so broke his right arm. Then, as he drew a revolver with his left, I sent a bullet through that, and my third shot was to bring down his horse to prevent his escape."

"Well, miss, you are a crack shot, and the fellow is the last one of Silk Sam's band, so that now there will be a clear trail to travel, I guess.

"I will have you take him on with you, Horseshoe Hal, and bring him back to the fort with you on your next run."

"I'll die if I am not cared for," groaned the man.

"Well, if I was in your place, pard, I'd want to die, as yer'll hang as sartin as I knows yer name," put in Horseshoe Hal.

"I did no harm," whined the man.

"Oh, no, yer didn't, but it wasn't your fault, all ther same, for yer intended ter rob this young lady and threatened to shoot her, too."

"Well, Hal, I'll do the best I can for his wounds until you reach the station where the doctors can care for him, and you must be careful that he does not escape."

"Yer won't go along, then, Bill?"

"No, for I am on a little scouting expedition I cannot neglect.

"I heard your shots, Miss Ardell, so rode on to see what was the matter.

"I congratulate you upon your nerve and splendid shooting."

"I thank you, sir; praise from such a man as Buffalo Bill is worth having."

"It was just splendid the way she did it, Bill," said Horseshoe Hal, who now, with the scout, set to work to dress the wounds of the road-agent.

Taking from her satchel several handkerchiefs, she tore them into strips for bandages and aided in dressing the wounds which she had made.

At last the work was done, the road-agent was placed in the coach and the doors secured firmly, and his traps were placed on the top.

Mounting the box again with Horseshoe Hal, she said good-by to Buffalo Bill and the team moved on once more.

Buffalo Bill followed on the trail of the coach, with no desire to be seen again by the woman whom he was watching.

He had not intended to be seen, only the firing had quickly taken him to the rescue.

"If she goes back to Red Pocket she means mischief of some kind, for having failed to rescue her brother by strategy, she will do so by force, I feel sure.

"If she was really the ally of her brother it is certain that the outlaw she wounded did not know it, for no look passed between them that I did not see, and she would not have fired on him had she known him.

"I would find it hard to believe that Bonnie Bess is in league with outlaws."

Thus he mused as he rode on after the coach.

It was night when he reached the station where Horseshoe Hal's run ended, and he went at once to the hotel.



He found Hal there and learned that his passenger had taken the outgoing coach eastward.

"That settles it," mused the scout.

"She goes east, and not to Red Pocket, for she has given up the idea of rescue as impossible.

"Poor girl, I pity her, and only wish she loved one in some way worthy of her deep regard."

Then he said:

"Well, Hal, what do you think of Miss Ardell?"

"I think she is just the dandiest girl I ever crossed ther trail of, Bill.

"But, Bill, ef yer hed seen Miss Ardell work up thet leetle racket to a climax, yer'd hev died o' joy.

"Yer see, I give up all for gone, when she talked ther same way and invited thet sarpint ter take ther things.

"She opened ther satchel and out come a gun, and oh, my!

"Bill, she's ther deadeest shot I ever seen, barrin' you."

"She has nerve of an uncommon order, Hal, and she sends a bullet to dead center. But where is your prisoner?"

"He's in ther tavern under guard, the doctor havin' fixed up his wounds."

"Are they very bad?"

"Ther leetle bone in his right arm were smashed, and ther bullet grazed the one in his left, but he'll be well enough to hang with t'others of ther gang, for it's his neck we wants in prime condition for that occasion.

"But whar is you goin', Bill?"

"I thought I would ride on here and see if you needed any aid going back with your man?"

"No, indeed, for I'll tie him on the box with me; but I'll be glad of your company, Bill, if you will go along."

"Thank you, no, for I'll continue on in my scouting along the range to-morrow."

Staying that night at the tavern, Buffalo Bill left bright and early the next morning, taking the trail for Yellow Valley.

He was well mounted, and it was not yet sunset when he rode by the lonely cabin of the miner, Deadshot Dick, a good friend of his. The cabin was closed and doubly locked, and an air of desolation and desertion was upon all.

The scout had hitched his horse down in the valley and walked up to the cabin.

Going to the rear of it, around the cliff, he stood gazing at the fine view from that point until suddenly he heard blows toward the cabin.

Quickly he made his way there and felt sure that some one was striving to break in.

Voices reached his ear, too, for one said:

"Yer hain't moved her, Jerry, so let me git a whack at her, as I fer one don't intend ter be caught in this neighborhood arter dark, for this is too near ther Hangman's Gulch ter suit me."

"And it don't please me a little bit."

"Take ther ax and let fly, for thar's money inside, I is dead sartin," was the reply.

The scout placed his foot on the projecting ends of the logs and quickly ascended to the roof, which was nearly flat and of boards on top of logs, slanting toward the cliff under which the cabin stood.

He drew a revolver in each hand, knelt down and peeping over, saw two men hard at work to break in the door, with a log held between them as a ram.

So far they had made no impression upon either the locks or the door, and covering both of them with a revolver, Buffalo Bill said, sternly:

"Hands up, pards, for I want you both!"

The voice coming from over their heads, and just after their expressed dread of being so near Hangman's Gulch when night came on, brought from the lips of each man a cry of fright.

They shrank back, looked up and saw their danger.

"Hands up, I say!" roared Buffalo Bill.

Quickly they dropped the log and obeyed, and in an instant the scout had leaped down from the roof and confronted them.

"Breaking into Deadshot Dick's home, are you?"

"Well, I am glad I happened along at this time, for the miner is a friend of mine, and I guess you are citizens who will not be missed if you are called suddenly away from Red Pocket.

"I'll take your weapons, sir," and the scout slipped the revolver and knife from the belt of one of them.

"And yours, too," and the second one was disarmed.

"Hain't you Buffalo Bill?"

"So I am called."

"Waal, I might have knowed it, for yer is allus around when yer ain't wanted."

"I'm a scout, you know," was the smiling answer.



"Waal, what does yer treat us this way fer?"

"When I get you to Red Pocket, it is more than likely you'll find out," was the scout's reply.

### CHAPTER CXXXIII.

#### A PAIR OF BAD ONES.

The men felt that they must get away at all costs, for an enraged border crowd was hard to manage and would only argue the matter after they were hanged.

"I say, Buffalo Bill, this is a darned good joke," said one of the prisoners.

"What is?"

"Your making us prisoners."

"Yes, it is funny."

"I doesn't see ther joke," growled the other.

"You haven't the sense of humor that your companion has, for he sees it," said the scout.

"But I means this, Pard Buffalo Bill, we was sent here by Deadshot Dick ter git some things for him, and as he hed lost his key he told us ter knock in ther door, don't yer see?"

"I see where you did the knocking, yes."

"Now, jist go with us ter Deadshot Dick and he'll say it's all right."

"Where is he?"

"Up ther canyon thar.

"We'll show yer."

"Look here, Deadshot Dick went East days ago, and you cannot play any bluff game on me."

"I tell yer ther truth."

"You couldn't tell the truth, either one of you except by accident.

"No, I am going to Red Pocket and you go with me.

"I caught you breaking into the cabin of an absent miner, and I shall so report to the miners and give you up to them."

"They'll hang us."

"That is your misfortune, not my fault."

"And we so innercent," whined one.

"See here, Buffalo Bill, we don't want ter hand in our chips no more than you does, so if yer plays quits with us, we'll divvy."

"What will you divide?"

"I've got nigh a thousand in money here with me, and Jerry have got about half as much, so you kin hev all if ye'll let us go."

"Yes, all of fifteen hundred dollars."

"Well, it is more money than I make in a year with chief of scout's pay, but if it were ten times as much, you could not bribe me to do it.

"I know you two scamps, whom hanging would be only justice, and as I caught you housebreaking, I'll report your acts. Come, you go with me. Stand close up behind this man, sir."

"Tom, we is goners."

"Dead sartin, Jerry."

Having placed the men at close step, Buffalo Bill buckled their belts together, and fastened them about their waists.

"I'll carry ther weapons, Buffalo Bill."

"No, thank you, Jerry, I can do so," was the smiling reply.

Shouldering the ax and iron bar, the two men had brought with them, and sticking their weapons in his belt, until he looked like a walking arsenal, Buffalo Bill made his prisoners march down the hill before him.

There he found his horse, and mounting, ordered the men to face toward Red Pocket and march.

They did so with low curses.

It was just before sunset as they passed Hangman's Gulch, and they glanced up into the dark recesses of the canyon, with many a misgiving that they would soon be more intimately acquainted with the weird and dreaded spot.

Just as twilight was falling, the scout heard the supper horn of the Frying Pan Hotel, and from that moment a stream of humanity began to pour out of the mines and cabins, and flow toward the rendezvous of the miners on every night.

They quickly caught sight of Buffalo Bill, whose handsome face and form were seldom seen in Yellow Valley, and beholding his prisoners, they began to call out, in many an odd question, as to what it meant.

"Ho, Tom and Jerry, what's up?"

"Hain't thet Buf'ler Bill?"

"What has yer got 'em in limbo fer, pard?"

"Has they been robbin' a hen-roost?"

"Say, pard, what has they been up ter?"

"Is yer goin' ter hang 'em?"

"They'll be no loss."

"How did yer git yer foot inter it, Tom and Jerry?"

Such questions flowed too fast for replies, and



though the scout remained silent, the two prisoners tried to explain, but were constantly cut off by fresh questions.

At last a commanding voice said:

"Ho, scout, what have those fellows been doing?"

The speaker was a storekeeper in the camps, and a man of considerable prominence, being captain of the Vigilantes.

He stood in front of the Frying Pan, where he had gone to get his supper.

"I was coming along the valley, near Deadshot Dick's cabin, and went up to take a look at it, when I saw these two men trying to break in the door.

"Here is the ax and bar they used.

"I climbed upon the roof and had them where I wanted them, so made them prisoners, determined to bring them to Red Pocket and turn them over to the miners, with a statement of the facts."

"They have a very bad record, sir, and have got their heads at last into the noose. Remember, Tom and Jerry, it has not been a week since I warned you that you were getting to the end of your rope.

"You, sir, I am told, are Buffalo Bill, chief of scouts at the military post?"

"I am, sir."

"Then turn over your prisoners to me for trial by our miner's laws, sir, for I am Scott King, captain of the Vigilantes and proprietor of the Miners' Market, as my store is called. I am glad to meet you, Buffalo Bill, so dismount and be my guest at the hotel to-night."

Invited as he was by the Vigilante captain to become his guest at the Frying Pan, Buffalo Bill could not decline, so he dismounted and led his horse to the stables.

He was shown to a room, where he freshened up for supper, and found every attention bestowed upon him by the clerk whom Bonnie Bess, the fair landlady of the tavern, had left to manage her affairs in her absence, and who seemed anxious to treat the scout well.

Bonnie Bess' private quarters were all securely locked up in her absence, but otherwise the hotel was in full blast, and the Vigilante captain and Buffalo Bill sat down to a very tempting supper.

The prisoners had been placed in safe hands, and with their guards were eating supper near, so the scout had an opportunity to see how much kindness as bestowed upon the two men.

"You see, the boys wish to do the best they can for them, as they regard them as dying men," explained the storekeeper.

"Dying men?"

"Well, it amounts to that, as we shall try them after supper, and that means a verdict of guilty."

"What is the use of trying them if the verdict is assured?" asked Buffalo Bill, with a smile.

"Well, for effect. You caught them trying to break into Deadshot Dick's cabin and rob it, and you brought here with you the implements they used, while you bear testimony to their guilt."

"True, but why not run them out of the camps, under penalty of death if they return?"

"That would never do, for of course every fellow that is run out has his purse made up for him by the sympathetic miners, and hereafter every man wanting money would do some act to be sent away for, whereas, if we try these men, find them guilty and hang them, Red Pocket will rid itself of two notorious scoundrels and their end will serve as a wholesome lesson for others."

"Well, if they are all you say they are they deserve hanging, yet I suppose it would have been better for me to have taken them to the fort to get justice."

"They will get justice here, for we will try them by the law of right. Now let me go and arrange for the trial."

"Need I appear in the matter, sir?"

"Well, as I am judge, I'll ask you to take a seat with me on the bench."

"You are very kind, sir; but I am only a witness."

"Well, you will have to face the prisoners and the crowd, so take a seat with me on the 'bench.'"

The "judge" evidently felt the importance of his position, and as he left the supper room, lighted his pipe and took up his position upon the piazza, where seats had already been placed for him and the prisoners.

The bench was one in reality, and Buffalo Bill sat down next to the judge, while the prisoners were placed in front of them.

The crowd had now increased to several hundred men, yet they were not noisy, and their silence was more expressive than their shouting would have been.

The prisoners were white with fear, for they sat where the light of a number of lanterns fell upon them.



They cast uneasy glances at the judge, baleful ones at Buffalo Bill, and pleading ones over the crowd, where they looked in vain for some sympathetic face.

The Vigilante captain called the meeting to order by rapping with his bowie-knife upon the bench.

It was as effective, however, as a golden gavel in Congress would have been.

Instantly there was a deathlike silence.

"Gentlemen," began the Vigilante captain, now acting as "judge," after clearing his throat:

"You have honored me by making me captain of the Vigilantes of Yellow Valley, and also have bestowed upon me the more honored title of Judge of the Criminal Court of Red Pocket.

"There are many of us present who remember that Yellow Valley was a very dangerous place of abode before the Vigilantes were organized, for lawlessness and disorder reigned supreme.

"But since they began to hunt down criminals and this court to sentence them for their crimes, see the change.

"Why, there has not been a murder in Red Pocket for thirty-six hours.

"A short while since this gentleman, Buffalo Bill, the military scout, now occupying a seat upon the bench with me, was ambushed by a gang of desperadoes, and would have been hanged but for the intervention of our honored fellow-citizen, Deadshot Dick, now absent, in the East, and who killed the ring-leader and saved a valuable life.

"Two of that gang are now arraigned before you as prisoners, charged with another offense against law and order.

"This gentleman, my fellow-citizens, I desire to introduce to you as a man whose name has spread from pole to pole, from the rising to the setting sun, as you will know when I tell you that he is Buffalo Bill."

A wild roar like thunder answered the words of the judge, and Buffalo Bill arose and bowed to the compliment bestowed upon him.

"Now, gentlemen," resumed the judge, "let me tell you that on his way to Red Pocket this evening, Buffalo Bill saw a sight which I am going to ask him to relate to you."

Thus urged, the scout arose and simply told his story as it is known to the reader.

Then the judge resumed:

"You have heard, gentlemen, and this case is tried

according to law and gospel, for as soon as we have heard your decision in the matter, and I can guess what it will be, I will pass sentence, after which I will read a chapter in the Bible and the Ten Commandments to the prisoners, and end by singing the Doxology.

"Now, gentlemen, are these men guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!" came with another voice like thunder.

## CHAPTER CXXXIV.

### HANGMAN'S GULCH.

The two prisoners fairly quaked under the angry response of guilt to the question of the judge, and Buffalo Bill quickly arose and signified his desire to speak.

The judge rapped for silence and said:

"We will hear what the great scout has to say."

"I would say, gentlemen, as a Government officer, it is my wish to have full justice done these men.

"It is true I caught them robbing a miner's cabin, or attempting to do so; but there are crimes far more heinous than that, and I beg that you will, in their case, give them as light a punishment as possible, for I am sure they will heed the warning they have had."

The words of the scout fell upon deaf ears, when he made an appeal for mercy.

He might as well attempt to stay the current of a river as check that mad element of humanity, for all eyes turned from him to the judge, who said:

"You have heard the appeal of our distinguished friend for mercy, and we will be merciful.

"As these men have been unanimously pronounced guilty, our mercy will be to not long keep them in the agony of their approaching doom, and hence I do hereby sentence them to be taken within the hour to Hangman's Gulch, and there to be hanged until all life shall leave them, for the good order of this community must and shall be preserved."

Again there was a roar, and once more rapping for silence the judge said:

"Officers, do your duty."

The two guards stepped forward, and over the head of each prisoner placed a noose.

Then the judge opened the Bible and read, just why, Buffalo Bill did not know, the story of Daniel in the Den of Lions.



This he followed with the Ten Commandments, dwelling particularly upon the eighth:

"Thou shalt not steal," and making it more impressive by the question put to the prisoners as to whether they heard it or not, and repeating it to them.

Following this three hundred voices sang the doxology, and then the judge arose, and locking his arm in Buffalo Bill's, led the way to Hangman's Gulch.

Buffalo Bill would not have dared refuse to go, and well he knew it, so he submitted in silence.

The guards and their prisoners followed, the twelve men who were to draw the doomed men into mid-air, each grasping the rope of their respective victim.

A slow and solemn step was kept to Hangman's Gulch, the many lanterns casting flickering shadows as they marched along.

At last the place was reached, already dotted with the graves of many men who had thus been tried and executed.

Into the dark, loathsome, weird place they filed, and soon approached the gallows where so many others had died.

The two prisoners were moaning, like men in physical pain, for they were cowards at heart.

Then they began to plead for mercy.

But they might as well have appealed to the cliffs about them as to the crowd, for while some there were doubtless merciful, they were too greatly in the minority to dare speak what they felt.

The ropes were thrown over the beam, which was greased, and, at a signal from the judge, the twelve men upon each line drew their victims up into mid-air, silencing their cries for mercy.

Then back from Hangman's Gulch surged the crowd, laughing and talking as they went over the affair, and it was generally agreed that Red Pocket would be the better for the hanging.

The Vigilante captain felt that he had done his duty, so repaired to his store in a very self-satisfied humor, while Buffalo Bill accompanied him for a short time, and began, in a quiet way, to question him about Bonnie Bess.

All he could learn was the fact that not a man in Yellow Valley was there to say one word against her, all holding her as above reproach.

Nothing was known of her antecedents, and there

was not the slightest suspicion that she was connected in any way with the road-agents under Silk Lasso Sam.

She had gone East upon some business of her own the storekeeper said, and Deadshot Dick, the miner, had been her escort, and Scott King hinted that he believed there was a strong feeling of friendship between the two.

This might result in marriage, and the "judge" hoped that it would as the miner was a splendid fellow in his opinion.

Then learning that the driver of the stage coach was in Red Pocket that night Buffalo Bill sought him out.

He found him at the Devil's Den, having just won all the money at poker which his adversary had.

He greeted the scout pleasantly, said that he had come in a couple of hours before and was glad to feel that the trail was free of outlaws.

"I wish to ask you, Pard Sands, something about Bonnie Bess," said Buffalo Bill.

At once Sands was all attention."

"Waal, pard, what kin I tell yer?"

"You took her in your coach when she went East?"

"Sure."

"And the miner?"

"Deadshot Dick?"

"Yes."

"He went along, too."

"Where did you leave them?"

"Waal, she left me at the Trail Junction."

"And the miner?"

"He went on East on the regular coach."

"And Bonnie Bess?"

"She took the upper branch trail via Omaha."

"East?"

"Yes."

And this answer caused Buffalo Bill to ponder deeply.

The manner in which Buffalo Bill meditated was thus:

"Now Bonnie Bess surely started East.

"Why then, did she leave Deadshot Dick at the Overland junction and take the upper trail?"

"Why did she turn back unless she had received some word from the fort, where her brother was a prisoner?"



Texas Jack, he recalled, had gone off on a special mission, which had not been reported to him.

He would inquire if Texas Jack had been to Red Pocket.

So he asked Sands if he had seen Texas Jack, his scout pard.

"Oh, yes."

"Where?"

"He came to Red Pocket, and then followed on after the coach."

"Why?"

"He had a letter for Bonnie Bess."

"From whom?"

"I don't know."

"He had overtaken the coach?"

"Yes."

"Did he deliver the letter?"

"He did, pard."

"And received an answer?"

"Not a written one, pard."

"A verbal one?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what it was?"

"I heard her say, 'Tell him simply that I will.'"

"Ah! and then?"

"Texas Jack went back on the trail, and I drove on with my passengers, Deadshot Dick leaving me by one trail at the junction and Bonnie Bess going by the upper trail, as I said."

"And you did not hear of her passing back over the trail?"

"See here, Buffalo Bill, you is chief of scouts at the post I knows well, and you has a right ter ask all questions of me; but I wants ter say if it's ter get Bonnie Bess inter trouble, I'll be a dumb man, sartin, and don't you fergit it."

"Pard Sands, that little woman has no better friend than I am, and I would protect, rather than do one act to cause her trouble; but I am on a secret trail, which I wish to see the end of, and you can help me by answering my questions, and perhaps save much trouble, for I believe there is a plot on hand to rescue Silk Lasso Sam and his men by force, and you surely do not wish to see those devils again turned loose upon the trails more revengeful than ever?"

"I does not, and I thanks you for being square with me, Buffalo Bill."

"The fact is, I did not hear of Bonnie Bess' going

west ag'in, but I happen to know thet she did go, and that's all I can tell you."

"Well, I'll ask no more, Sands, to-night, at least. Good-night," and Buffalo Bill remained in the Devil's Den while the driver left it with his winnings in his pocket, and quite satisfied with having won two months' pay within an hour, never taking into consideration that he had lost far more in the past few weeks.

The scout was the center of all eyes as he leisurely strolled about the gambling saloon, going from table to table, risking a few dollars at faro, and winning, then being equally as lucky at dice throwing, when he received a challenge from a miner to play him a game of cards.

"Oh, yes, I'll play if you wish, though I had not intended to when I came in," said the scout.

"Waal, I plays for big stakes and don't you forgit it," was the answer of the challenger.

Buffalo Bill took his measure in a steady look at him.

He thought that his face was familiar, but he was not sure, for he could not recall where he had seen him before.

He was a man even larger than the scout, for he was more brawny, weighing over 200 pounds and as hard as iron.

His face was bearded, his hair worn long, and he carried no knife in his belt, but, instead, four revolvers, two in front and one on each hip, so that no matter where he dropped his hand it must fall upon the butt of a "gun."

He wore no superfluous clothing, either, his miner's shirt, corduroy pants, top boots, and slouch hat pulled down over his eyes, making up his wardrobe.

The carrying of four revolvers had gained him the name of "Guns," and that he knew how to use them, too, several graves upon Sunset Hill gave testimony.

He was peacefully inclined when not drinking, but when under the influence of liquor his best friends avoided him religiously, and those who saw him challenge Buffalo Bill to play cards felt that the scout had made a mistake in accepting, for they discovered that Guns was drinking, and that meant a row they were certain.

In answer to the remark of the man that he played for big stakes, Buffalo Bill asked in his quiet way:

"What do you call big stakes, pard?"



"What does I call big stakes?"

"Yes, that is the question I asked."

"Waal, I call without a limit big money."

"Are you able to stand a game without a limit?"

"Is I? Ask my pards if I can't call ye at a thousand and pay if I lose."

"Oh, a thousand is your limit, then?"

"Can you match me?"

"If I could not I would not play with you; but when you said without limit, I wished to know what you meant, as you can size my pile at a thousand. Now you know what I can do, so say whether you will play or back down?"

"Back down?" yelled the miner, savagely.

"Yes," was the perfectly calm response.

"I never backs down ag'in' any odds."

"Then play," said Buffalo Bill, in the coolest manner possible.

## CHAPTER CXXXV.

### A DANGEROUS GAME.

The interest in the games going on in Devil's Den very quickly were centered in the match between Buffalo Bill and Guns.

"I'm out for scalps," the miner had said in a voice that was heard all over the saloon.

At this Buffalo Bill looked him squarely in the face, and there was something in the look that controlled the man, and he said:

"I see now that you have been drinking.

"Had I supposed this I would not have played with you, for I never play with a drunken man.

"Behave yourself, now, or quit before trouble follows."

There was that in the words and look which mastered the man, for he made at first no reply; but then he said:

"What did I say to make you mad?"

"Nothing, for I am not angry; but you said you were out for scalps, and I wish you to understand that I take the same trail when there is need for it."

The man appeared cowed, for he said:

"We don't want trouble, Buffalo Bill, so shall I git a fresh pack of cards, and will yer take a drink?"

"Thank you, I do not care to drink, and you take my advice and let it alone. But get the cards."

An angry gleam came into the eyes of Guns.

But he made no reply, and walked to the bar after a fresh pack of cards.

"Grimes, give me a fresh pack, and some whisky, too," he said.

"Here's the cards, Guns, but take my advice and don't drink any more, for Buffalo Bill is a stranger here," said Grimes.

"Waal, he wants ter git better acquainted with ther folks. Whisky, I said, straight, strong and blistering."

Had Bonnie Bess been there, Grimes would have refused.

But to do the best he could he took a half-empty bottle, hastily poured water into it, and set it before the man, hoping to have him get but half the quantity.

The miner found it out, held it up to the lamp and looked at it.

"Is this pale sherry, Grimes?"

"It's whisky."

"You lies, for you have drowned it with water, so you kin hev it!"

Quick as a flash, he dashed the stuff full into the face of poor Grimes, who, blinded and maddened, drew his revolver and fired a shot at random.

It was the last act of his life, for he dropped dead with a bullet in his brain, while Guns called out:

"He put water into my whisky, pards, and then shot at me, so I kilt him.

"Thar he lies behind the bar."

To put water in whisky was a criminal offense which the miners of Yellow Valley could not forgive or forget, and so Grimes lost the sympathy of the crowd by his heinous act, while Guns rose in their estimation for visiting just punishment upon one who would do such a thing.

"Now, pard, I want some whisky," and Guns turned to the bartender nearest, who quickly placed a fresh bottle before him, while the miner took the other which had caused the trouble and dashing it against the wall at the rear of the bar shivered it to atoms.

"Yer shan't p'izen no one else with watered whisky," he said.

Then turning to those who had gathered about him, he said:

"Jine me, folks, in a leetle beverage, for I'm bettin' high it will be ther Simon-pure article.

"Does yer catch on?"

They "caught on" with alacrity, and with the upturned, pallid face of Grimes, the eyes wide open



staring into his own, Guns poured his glass full to the brim and dashed it down his capacious throat.

A hush had fallen upon the crowd during this scene, and a few of the timid ones, or, rather, those who wished to avoid being in a row, silently withdrew from the building.

There were several who felt that Buffalo Bill was making a sad mistake in having accepted the challenge of Guns, while others knew that had he not done so, in the then temper of the man, a row would have been precipitated at once, for he would certainly have insulted the scout then and there.

A few now hastened to tell Buffalo Bill, who had not risen from his seat, that Guns had just killed Grimes and had then taken a tumbler full of whisky, so was in a dangerous mood, and having braced himself up to the right pitch by the liquor he would seek an encounter.

"He didn't have quite enough ter brace him fer trouble with you, pard, for he has heerd o' you, as we all has, and that's why he got more.

"He's primed now and will go off like a hair trigger," a miner said.

"Yas, so jist go out and let him alone," another said.

Buffalo Bill smiled serenely.

It was a smile that some who saw it felt boded mischief.

Then he said, complacently:

"I never seek trouble, gentlemen, unless I am after a man I know needs running down, and duty compels me.

"I sought no trouble with your comrade, and merely accepted his challenge, so he can turn it into any game that suits his humor best."

"Here he comes now," cried a voice, and just then Guns was seen approaching the table where Buffalo Bill sat, a cigar between his teeth.

With a lurch, Guns dropped into his chair and glared at Buffalo Bill.

"I has come back," he said.

"So I see."

"There's ther pack o' cards," and he tossed them upon the table.

Buffalo Bill picked them up, glanced at them, and said:

"Yes, they are all right."

"Did yer think I'd git any as wasn't?"

"Not being acquainted with you, I didn't know."

"Waal, we'll git better acquainted, I'm thinking."

"Perhaps."

"Come, don't git skeered, for I hain't goin' ter shoot, only I had to kill a feller over thar, just now, and I is loadin' my gun ag'in"

"You are very wise."

"Yer see, he insulted me."

"I can hardly believe that possible."

There were a number who heard this reply who appreciated its sarcasm.

Guns felt that there was a meaning in it he could not fathom, so he did not try, and said:

"Yes, he put water in my whisky."

"Did he not know you?"

"Yas, only he tried to play a underhand game on me.

"We has been mighty good friends, Grimes and me, for he has twice saved my life, and he meant well toward me, I is sart'in, fearin' I sh'u'd git too much, so he put water in my whisky, and I'd kill my brother for a insult like that."

"I can believe you; but may he not have been only wounded?"

"Yer don't know me, pard, for I never wastes powder and lead, but shoots to kill.

"I is sorry my poor pard, Grimes, committed suicide, for he should have know'd me well. But he's out o' misery now, and I'll pay all ther expenses of ther fuseral and give him a beautiful send-off on ther trail ter glory, an' put up a stone over him with a inscription as a warnin' to them who puts water in whisky, which I drinks ter git all o' the leetle devil out of it I kin. Does yer tumble?"

"Oh, yes; but do you still wish to play with me?"

"Does I?"

"Yes."

"Why, pard, I is in fer a game o' anything with you."

"Then let us begin."

The words were so quietly uttered, the look of the scout was so calm, that it checked the devil gaining the ascendancy of the man for a minute, for he saw that they meant:

"Whatever your game with me, begin when you please."

But he did not interpret it into that way of meaning, so said:

"All right, pard, I is ready."



The cards were shuffled, cut for the deal, and Buffalo Bill won.

Then the cards were thoroughly shuffled and the game was begun.

All who watched the two men, and they were all who could crowd about them, saw that the scout was as cool as an icicle, showing not the slightest dread of what any one who was near felt sure must end in a deadly combat between the two players.

Buffalo Bill serenely smoked his cigar, his face remaining impassive, and yet those who watched him closely saw that his eyes were rather upon his adversary than his cards.

The game was played more carefully by Guns than those who saw him believed possible, for he was cautious in all he did and leered maliciously at Buffalo Bill when he gained a point.

At last he seemed to brighten up and said:

"A hundred on my hand, Buffalo Bill."

"Mine is worth twice that sum."

"I'll add that more to mine."

"So will I," was the quiet response.

"I calls yer," said the miner, without showing his hand, and the scout pocketed the money.

That Guns felt his loss was evident to all, for his face grew darker and an uglier look came into his eyes.

"Well, how much is your hand, Mister Guns?" asked the scout when the climax of the second game came around.

"It's worth a hundred," and Guns appeared confident then.

"No more?"

"Well, what is your hand worth?"

"Just five hundred dollars, no more no less."

The miner started. Could it be possible that the scout held a better hand than he did this time?

No, it could not be. The lightning would not strike twice in the same spot.

"I jist says show up to ther tune of five hundred."

Buffalo Bill put up the money he had just won, adding more to it, and said:

"There, match that with five hundred."

The miner drew out a greasy buckskin bag and took out a roll of bills.

He counted out very slowly five hundred dollars, and it could be seen that very little remained in the bag.

"Thar she goes, and yer needn't squint at ther

bag, fer thar is more whar thet come from. Now I'm thinkin' your money is mine, so show yer hand."

"Four aces," said the scout, without a change of muscle.

"Four aces!" roared the miner. "Four aces ag'in' my four kings! How comes that?"

"You dealt, pard, and were more generous to me than to yourself," and Buffalo Bill very quietly put the money in his pocket, while he said:

"I'll play you another game to give you a chance to win back your money, or lose more, if you wish it."

"There's but one more game I'll play with you, Buffalo Bill, and that's with these," and the miner quickly leveled his revolvers.

## CHAPTER CXXXVI.

### BUFFALO BILL AT BAY—A CRITICAL SITUATION.

The miner's words and act at once cleared a lane behind Buffalo Bill and himself between the crowds that had gathered around.

But the act did not appear to disturb the scout.

If caught off his guard by the sudden drawing of his revolvers by Guns, Buffalo Bill remained as cool as before, and said:

"Then you are willing to play a square game with me with revolvers, are you?"

"I is going ter play a game with you, yes, but there's others in it, besides, for I has something to say to you, Buffalo Bill."

"Talk fast, then, old man, for life's short, you know."

"Oh, it'll be short enough to you, when I tells what I knows ag'in you."

"What do you know?"

"I knows that you was ther cause o' havin' two innocent men strung up in Hangman's Gulch this night. I only wish I'd been at ther hangin' for they wouldn't hev been ther men thet got choked."

"I am listening."

"But me and my pard, Dunn, got in too late ter save them poor murdered men, and when I heerd what had been done, says I, thet as Buffalo Bill has got ter die ter-night, I'll just be his heir by winning his money first."

"So I axes yer ter play me."

"And I did."

"Yas, for sure."

"And I became your heir, as you put it."



"So far."

"Well, what else?"

"A heap, for I wants ter let ther folks know thet Dunn and me were up in ther range and seen you breakin' inter ther cabin o' Deadshot Dick."

There went a murmur through the crowd at this, while Buffalo Bill said, indifferently:

"Is that all? Why, I feel relieved, for I was afraid you were going to accuse me of cheating you."

"Oh, no, yer played square enough, for I was a-watchin' yer; but we seen yer breaking inter Deadshot's cabin, and Tom and Jerry caught yer at it."

"But you was too soon for them, got them under ther muzzle of yer gun and trotted them off as house-breakers, when you was the thief."

"Why did you not at once come to their rescue?" asked Buffalo Bill, when the uproar which these words created had in a measure subsided.

"We was up in Eagle Mountain, and it took us a long time ter git down ter ther valley and up to Red Pocket."

"Then we found thet ther folks hed believed you, Buffalo Bill, ag'in' them men, and it were too late."

"So we talked it over and thar is just a large-sized community here to-night as says you has got ter hang, too."

"Why not make it by unanimous consent, Mister Guns, for it would sound better when reported at the fort to Colonel Wood?"

The crowd gave vent to a murmur of admiration at the scout's pluck.

He did not appear to be in the least degree disturbed by the danger he most certainly was in.

"Oh, I knows yer is game, and I has just seen that yer kin bluff, but thet don't go now."

"What does?"

"Ropes is trumps."

"You intend to hang me, then?"

"We does."

"Without judge or jury?"

"We have set on your case and it is ag'in yer."

"When am I to be hanged?"

"Afore daylight."

"Isn't that crowding matters a little?"

"No more crowdin' than ag'in' ther two poor boys as was hanged ter-night."

"And you saw me break into Deadshot Dick's cabin?"

"I did."

"And the other witness?"

"Was Dunn."

"I do not believe anybody here who has common sense will believe any such charge against me," said the scout while, with his elbows resting upon the table at which he sat, Guns held his revolver in both of his hands, covering the heart of the scout.

"Yer don't believe it?"

"No, I don't."

"Pards, does I tell the truth?"

In his excitement, the miner turned his head, and in that instant his revolver was struck upward and knocked from his hand by Buffalo Bill, who now held him covered with his weapon.

"A turn about is fair play, Guns."

Some laughed at this, but Guns swore roundly, yet dared not move, for he saw he was caught, the left hand of the scout lying upon his own weapon where it had fallen upon the table, the right holding his revolver within a foot of his eyes.

But the words of the miner had been answered by a savage chorus of voices, crying:

"You is right, Pard Guns, for Buffalo Bill is the guilty man."

Still, the pluck of the scout did not desert him, and he never changed expression at the outburst.

Taking courage at the cries of his comrades, though under cover of the scout's revolver, the miner said:

"See here, Buffalo Bill, you has half a hundred guns on you, but we don't intend ter shoot yer, but hang yer, as you got poor Tom and Jerry strung up, so up with yer hands, mighty quick, says I."

"Yes, up with your hands, Buffalo Bill!" shouted the crowd, savagely, while scores of revolvers covered the scout as he still sat at the table, facing the ring-leader, whom he yet held his revolver upon, the muzzle within a foot of his eyes.

It certainly did look bad for Buffalo Bill, and for two reasons.

First, the charge of Guns, backed by Dunn, a reputable miner, seemed to be believed by a great many of those present.

Second, the crowd that backed Guns was not only numerous but composed of the very worst element in the mines.

This shut off many who felt that the accusation was utterly false, from lending any aid.

Guns was certainly in danger of instant death at



the hands of the scout, but the latter was equally in danger of sudden death from the backers of his accuser.

Thus the situation rested until Buffalo Bill broke the silence with:

"See here, Guns, I recall that ugly face of yours, now that I get a better look at it, and I remember you as one of Powder Pete's gang who ambushed me some time ago, under pretense that I was Lasso Sam.

"You wished to get rid of me then because I make this country too hot for just such men as you.

"Now, what are you going to do about it, Mister Guns, for if I am facing death, you are just as close as I am to it, so begin business when you please, and you'll find that I'll never hang, and, dying, will take a companion along, so as not to get too lonesome on the trail across the Dark River."

The splendid pluck of Buffalo Bill, at bay against a crowd, delighted many present.

But those who surrounded him were his foes, and the better element hung back, feeling that a terrible scene must follow the first shot fired.

Guns felt the situation keenly.

The danger had sobered him, and his desire was to be able to see Buffalo Bill hanged by the crowd, and it began to look as though he would not be there to witness it.

This he did not want, and he felt how certain death was to him if his comrades pushed the scout to extremes.

Such was the situation, and the suspense to all was fearful, and especially to Guns and the scout, though the scout was, as a miner expressed it to a pard:

"Beautifully serene."

What the result would have been was assured, for the crowd was becoming restless, and there were those who did not love Guns, and so would push matters to a climax to get him killed that they might then hang the scout.

But just as it seemed that another instant must come a crash, a loud, stern voice rang out with:

"What does this mean, holding a Government officer under your guns? Room, there, men!" and hurling men right and left by his giant strength as though they were children, the Surgeon Scout strode to the side of Buffalo Bill, who still sat at the table, covering the miner with his revolver.

A perfect yell of joy burst from many in the crowd

who thus gave vent to their pent-up feelings as they saw the splendid form of Frank Powell, the Surgeon Scout, in uniform, stride into the midst of the scene.

"Ah, doc, just in time to keep me from killing this gent, and being the target myself for half a hundred bullets," said Buffalo Bill, still unmoved by his rescue.

"It seems that I am just in time, Bill, and if I mistake not, there are men in this crowd who will dangle at a rope's end for this work, if they harm a hair of your head.

"What does it mean?"

The ugly element in the crowd was still paramount.

It had only received a temporary check by the coming of the Surgeon Scout.

The greatest number of the miners present were now, however, decidedly on the side of law and order, but the devil in the nature of the others was destined to lead them on to trouble.

They did not care whether Guns died or not at the hands of Buffalo Bill. They hated Bill because he was the foe of the bad element in the mines.

They hated the army because it put down lawlessness.

Here was a chance to wipe out the chief of scouts and Surgeon Powell, both of whom they stood in the greatest awe of.

They, this ugly element, were sixty to two, and they had nothing to lose.

The army would sweep down upon the Yellow Valley, of course, but who could be found who would be punished?

Thus the men who had backed Guns argued, and with a desire for a row, a wish to sacrifice Buffalo Bill and the Surgeon Scout, and having had enough whisky to make them reckless of consequences, they began to crowd closely upon the center of attraction, where Cody sat still covering Guns, and with the Surgeon Scout by his side, a revolver in each hand.

It was a most critical moment, for the officer and the scout saw that the authority of the latter was going to be defied.

"Men, don't mind what brass buttons says, for as he's chipped inter the game he goes with Buffalo Bill.

"Don't shoot, for that means innocent men hurted, but capter them two game cocks alive and hang 'em.



"Does I say right?" and the burly ruffian who had constituted himself leader gazed at the crowd with a look that demanded recognition.

CHAPTER CXXXVII.

BONNIE BESS TO THE RESCUE—THE TABLES TURNED.

"I am sorry you came, Frank, for it only brings you into a tight place," said Buffalo Bill in a low tone to the Surgeon Scout, and he at once drew a second revolver from his belt to have it ready, though he did not take his eyes off of the miner whom he covered.

"I don't mind it, Bill, and I'm always ready to die, if need be, for a comrade.

"If they make a rush, kill that man, then stand back to back with me and let us make a record before we go under," was Powell's response.

"I'm with you until sunset, Frank," replied Cody, and he added, addressing the miner:

"You started this circus, Mister Guns, but you won't see the end of it."

"Cuss you, I'll call 'em off if you'll call it quits," returned Guns, eagerly, now thoroughly terrified when he saw another leader in the field who meant to precipitate matters independent of him.

"Pard, you talk in your sleep, for you could no more call off that pack of hounds than you could tell the truth.

"No, you set the tune and the song must be sung through."

In the meantime the Surgeon Scout was watching the wildly-swaying crowd, which was gradually drawing closer about them, and he was just about to open fire when there suddenly rang out a clear voice above the noisy hum:

"Hold! What does this mean, I should like to know?"

Instantly there was silence; intense, in that it followed such an uproar.

Then hats were doffed, the crowd swayed apart, and toward the table, where Buffalo Bill still held the miner under cover of his revolver, and the Surgeon Scout stood at bay by his side, glided Bonnie Bess.

She was dressed in a blue dress, trimmed with silver braid, wore a slouch hat with a heavy sable plume, and carried a revolver in each hand.

Behind her came Sands, the driver of the Overland, and then Scott King, the captain of the Vigilantes.

But Bonnie Bess neither needed aid nor asked it. Her simple presence commanded respect.

They had deemed her far away in the East, and, like an apparition, she had glided into the door she always entered by, leading to her own quarters, and her white face, now stern and threatening, showed that she was in no humor to be trifled with.

"Ah, Surgeon Powell, it is you, and you also, Buffalo Bill, whom these roughs hold at bay?

"And what for?"

"I was scouting, Bonnie Bess, and came upon two men, Tom and Jerry, they called them, breaking into Deadshot Dick's cabin.

"I made them prisoners, brought them here and the Vigilantes hanged them.

"To-night this man, whom I have covered, accused me of breaking into the cabin, and he was not long in getting willing hands to hang me, and but for the coming of Surgeon Powell it would have all been over ere this."

"And I only checked the trouble for a few minutes, Bonnie Bess, as the men turned upon me, also.

"I took Buffalo Bill's trail and followed him here, for somehow I feared he might need aid.

"You have saved us both by your timely coming, unless the gentlemen wish to push their quarrel to a conclusion."

But "the gentlemen" did not seem to be so inclined, or, if they did, the words of Bonnie Bess checked them, for she said, sternly:

"No, there will be no trouble here, for the man who raises a weapon against you I will kill.

"As for you, Guns, if you ever enter my hotel or this saloon again I will see that you do not do so a second time.

"Grimes, do you hear what I say about this man?"

A silence most fearful followed, and as no answer came Bonnie Bess called again:

"Grimes!"

"If you are calling your man you left in charge here, Bonnie Bess, he is dead," said Buffalo Bill, as no one else seemed to care to speak.

"Grimes dead!" she repeated, with a start.

"Yes."

"When did he die?"

"To-night."

"Ha! he was killed."

"Ask one of your men here to tell you about it, Bonnie Bess."



She called a bartender and was told the story.

She listened in silence, making no comment, and then turned to Scott King and asked:

"Captain, is this not a case of murder?"

"It looks so, Bonnie Bess."

"This man Guns has been carrying too high a hand for the safety and comfort of the good citizens in Yellow Valley, and it appears to me that he needs disciplining by the Vigilantes."

"Say the word, Bonnie Bess, and he travels the trail to Hangman's Gulch," the Vigilante captain said, very decidedly.

Bonnie Bess was lost for a moment in thought, while Guns gazed at her with a look of pleading and despair commingled.

At last she spoke:

"No, Captain King, I will not say the word, for I wish no man's life upon my conscience, where it can be avoided.

"The mines will be the better for the taking off of those men, Tom and Jerry, and it would make it more respectable to rid us of this man Guns.

"He has no mine or claim here, carries his fortune with him, I believe, so give him until sunrise to get out of the camps, while, that he may not be lonesome, let this man who was leading the attack upon Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill go with him.

"Shall it be so, comrades?" and Bonnie Bess glanced over the crowd, which answered with a yell that nearly raised the roof.

Guns was too happy to escape with his life to grumble at anything that might be put upon him, and he was but too anxious to get away from the saloon and start upon his exile, feeling that there was safety only in placing many miles between himself and Yellow Valley.

Dunn, the other alleged witness against Buffalo Bill, had been led into making the charge by his comrade, Guns, and seeing how matters were going, had slipped out of Devil's Den and hastened to his cabin to prepare for an immediate farewell.

The burly fellow who had made himself a leader against Surgeon Powell would have been glad to have escaped the notice of Bonnie Bess.

But her words had brought the eyes of the Vigilantes upon him, and he was anxious to get away, and so with Guns skulked out into the darkness.

They had hastened to their respective quarters then, making an agreement to meet at Dunn's in

half an hour's time, and when the sun rose the two were making lively tracks down the valley, carrying their belongings upon a pole slung between them, and with all the wealth they possessed in their pockets.

"I would like to see you and Buffalo Bill, Surgeon Powell," said Bonnie Bess, in a low tone.

"We are going at once to the hotel."

"I will see you there," and Bonnie Bess circled about the room, greeted everywhere with the most cordial welcome.

In the meantime, Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill were congratulated on all sides, and by those who had not shown the nerve to come to their rescue.

But they received all that was said coldly, gauging it at about what it was worth, and passed out of the saloon to the hotel.

The scout already had a room there, and the surgeon was given one next to him, and so they repaired to them at once.

"It came over me, Bill, to follow you that I might be of service.

"I am not superstitious, as you know, but I had a dream in which I saw you in a close place with Indians about you, and when I awoke it was so vivid to me that I wrote the colonel a note and started upon your trail without waiting until dawn.

"I went on to the end of Horseshoe Hal's run, and he told me you were going down to Red Pocket, so here I came."

"And just in time, Frank, to save my life."

"It seems so. I was told you were there. I went over to the Den and saw what was going on, so chipped in only too quickly.

"But though I postponed matters for a while, we both would have been food for coyotes at this present time, had not Bonnie Bess arrived."

"And how did she come?"

"I do not know."

"She started East from the Junction."

"Well, she came here instead, fortunately for us. Come in!"

A Chinese servant entered and said:

"Missee say 'Melican men come with Chinaman."

This invitation was promptly accepted by the surgeon and the scout, and they were led by the Chinaman to the private quarters of Bonnie Bess.

There she had a supper spread out for them, though



it was after one o'clock, and receiving them cordially, said:

"I wish to have a talk with you, gentlemen, and you will join me at supper, please."

They readily consented, the Chinaman waiting upon the table, and Bonnie Bess showing herself to be a most charming hostess.

The supper being over, and the Chinaman having departed, Bonnie Bess handed her guests a couple of fine cigars and said:

"I enjoy the fragrance of tobacco smoke, for to me a good cigar is fragrant, so please light them."

They did as told, and then Bonnie Bess threw herself into an easy-chair in a tired way and said:

"I am really fatigued, for I have had a long ride since leaving the fort.

"I knew that you were on my trail, Buffalo Bill, and I am glad that you were, as you came up in time to serve both Horseshoe Hal and myself as well."

"You are fully able to protect yourself, Bonnie Bess," said the scout.

"And others, too," remarked Surgeon Powell.

"Well, as I wished to throw you off the scent, I went on eastward by stage; but only for a couple of stations, where I secured a horse and guide, going across country to head off Sands on his way here.

"I caught his coach and made him promise not to tell of my arrival, so he drove, as there were no other passengers, at once to the stables, and I got out there and ran to my rooms here.

"It was Sands who heard of the row in the Den, and he came for me, just as I intended going into the saloon as a surprise.

"Now, I have a favor to ask of both of you."

"Granted before asked," said Surgeon Powell.

"So say I," responded Buffalo Bill.

## CHAPTER CXXXVIII.

### BONNIE BESS' SECRET.

"You are very kind, to offer to grant me a favor without knowing what it is.

"Suppose I ask you something that you cannot conscientiously do?" said Bonnie Bess, with a smile.

"That is impossible, for you would not ask anything of us which we cannot conscientiously do," was the response of the surgeon.

"It is not too much to ask, I feel."

"It would have to be much indeed for us to refuse you, Bonnie Bess, for both of us owe you our lives,

and you may be sure, if not profuse in thanks, we appreciate all that we are under obligations to you for," and Surgeon Powell's manner was sincere.

"Do not speak of what I did, for one does not deserve either thanks or gratitude for doing one's duty.

"No, I only wished to ask you both not to betray me "

"Not betray you?"

"Yes, for no one knows here, except you two gentlemen, that I am the sister of the condemned outlaw, Silk Lasso Sam. Not a soul do I wish to know it."

"And no one shall through me."

"Nor through word of mine," added Buffalo Bill.

"I believe that Captain Carr suspected me, and yet when I met him face to face at the fort he did not by any act show that he did.

"He simply looked as though he recalled Bonnie Bess in Miss Ardell, and, if so, I wish that you would ask him also to keep my secret."

"I will."

"And he will do it."

"I do not care to have any one here know that I am the sister of the outlaw, for it would bring me under a suspicion with many which I would not care for.

"Now I can do good, and I have a certain power over the wildest spirits here, which you had an opportunity to see yourselves to-night."

"We did, indeed," said Buffalo Bill.

"And it was in our behalf."

"You have indeed wonderful power over the wild savages that congregate here in Red Pocket," the surgeon remarked.

"As the sister of the outlaw chief, no matter how innocent I might be, you can well understand how I would lose my power.

"A wicked man might influence them, yet not a wicked woman.

"It is only by holding myself pure in all things that I retain my influence, and I wish to be so respected unto the end."

"You are a very remarkable woman, Bonnie Bess, and one whom both of us hold in the highest respect.

"Let me tell you, if it is a pleasure for you to know it, that you are most highly respected and admired by all at the fort, especially the warm friend you made in Colonel Wood.



"Did they know you as Bonnie Bess they would not change their opinions regarding you.

"But I can well understand that this community knowing you to be the sister of Silk Lasso Sam, the road-agent chief, would at once suspect you of being secretly his ally in wrong-doing, so your secret shall be kept."

"I thank you most sincerely, Surgeon Powell."

"And permit me to say, Bonnie Bess, that I switch off of your trail at once.

"I followed, for I believed that you intended to rescue your brother," said Buffalo Bill. "I believed that you went to the fort to accomplish it by strategy, and finding yourself thwarted gave it up. Then, I frankly confess, my idea was that you intended to accomplish by force what you had failed to do by strategy, that is, secure a number of men here who would follow your lead and thus rescue your brother."

"No, I would not accomplish his rescue, save his life, even, by the taking of another life.

"What I could not accomplish by strategy I would not do by force."

"I can believe that of you now, since what you have done and said to-night."

"Let me tell you, Buffalo Bill, what I could have done to-night," said Bonnie Bess, eagerly.

"Yes."

"I could have seized both you and Surgeon Powell, sent you into hiding where your best scouts could not have found you, and there have held you as hostages to be given in exchange for my brother, or put to death if he was executed."

"You are right, for you surely could have done that."

"Without doubt," said Powell.

"But I would not do so, and I would not wish to be known as connected with the outlaw in any way, and I thank you both for your promise not to betray me. It is late now, so I will say good-night."

"Good-night."

They bowed themselves out, both impressed with the thought that they had stood in the presence of a very superior woman and one as pure as a pearl, in spite of her surroundings and the calling she followed, as mistress of the Frying Pan Hotel and the Devil's Den gambling saloon.

"Frank, I would not place a straw in the way of that girl to do her harm," said Buffalo Bill, as the two friends reached their room.

"I would protect her from harm with my life, Bill," was the rejoinder of the surgeon.

"Do you know she takes the coming execution of her brother, loving him as she does, very coolly?"

"Yes, Bill, and it sets me to thinking."

"And me."

"You have an idea?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"That she may accomplish by strategy, after all, the rescue of Silk Lasso Sam."

"It may be, for she is a very clever woman, and one dangerous to balk when she sets her mind upon carrying out a plot."

"She is, indeed."

One of the rules of Bonnie Bess, and one which was religiously respected, was that the Devil's Den should never open on Sundays, and the miners seemed really glad of this respite from the noisy bustle of the place, and the gambling and drinking which were sure to come.

The more that Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill saw of the strange woman, who seemed to hold the destinies of Red Pocket in her little hand, the more they were pleased with her, and mystified.

They knew that there was an unreadable page of her history to which she alone held the key.

She talked like one who had seen much of the world, young as she was.

Her reading had been varied and instructive, and she seemed glad of a chance to discuss something else than hotel fare, gambling and mining.

When the officer and scout bade her good-night and good-by, for they said they were to leave at an early hour the next morning, she asked, with a smile:

"And is this to swing around the circle, Buffalo Bill, and still play the detective upon me?"

"No, indeed, it is not," answered the scout, flushing at the insinuation.

"I am glad of it, for we must be friends, you know."

"We certainly shall be, if I am to have my way," said the scout, warmly.

"And we are also to be friends, Dr. Powell, for, candidly, I will not do aught to cause either of you any trouble, and if I fight you, should anything turn up to cause me to do so, it shall be by strategy not force."



"Then we may as well acknowledge ourselves beaten when we are to measure strength in strategy with a woman," said Surgeon Powell.

"For shame, to acknowledge defeat before the combat. It is not like you, Dr. Powell."

"I am dealing with a woman now, Bonnie Bess, not a man."

"Well, do not you, Buffalo Bill, track me, for it will do no good, I assure you. I know that you wish to thwart me in setting my brother free, and from your standpoint you are right.

"But all that I could do in the matter I have done."

"And failed?" said Buffalo Bill, with a smile.

"I leave that for you to decide, gentlemen. But good-night."

She grasped the hand of each in her frank way, and they left her.

When they went to pay their score the clerk told them that there was no charge against them, as they were the guests of the fair mistress of the Frying Pan.

They could but accept the courtesy, and the clerk said that an early breakfast had been ordered for them.

And so the next morning they turned their backs upon Red Pocket, and took the trail for the post.

Their way led by the Hangman's Gulch, and they turned in there to have a look at the numerous graves of the victims who had suffered there, dying at the end of a rope.

The two freshly-made graves of Tom and Jerry were there, and as he looked at them Buffalo Bill said:

"Twice have I come very near being placed here, Frank."

"You have indeed, Bill."

"Once, Deadshot Dick saved me from Powder Pete and his gang, and you saved me the next time by your timely arrival, for those fellows intended hanging me."

"And Bonnie Bess saved us both, Bill," was the answer.

As they neared the fort they came in sight of the stage trail, and upon reaching it heard the rumbling of the coach behind them.

A few minutes after the coach came in sight, and by the side of Horseshoe Hal sat a stranger upon the box.

## CHAPTER CXXXIX.

### AN OFFICER OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

"Ho, Surgeon Powell, how is yer, and you, too, Bill?" cried Horseshoe Hal, as the coach drew up to the two pards just as they came within sight of the fort.

"All right, thank you, Hal. Have you seen any road-agents this trip,?" asked the scout.

"You bet I hain't on the run back, doctor, but I has a pilgrim inside who held me up when I was going east, as I guess Buffalo Bill told you."

"Yes, he told me what a dead shot your lady passenger proved to be."

"Dead shot? Now, I should remark; but she is, ther deadeest of ther dead shots, and no mistake. She's one among a thousand, and no harm said ag'in t'others, but I guesses yer'll hev ter doctor my man up, sir, for he's been in the hands o' that old pills at ther station, and maybe he don't know much about doctorin'."

"All right, Horseshoe Hal, I'll do all I can for him; but you appear to have several passengers along on this run?"

"You bet I has, sir, three passengers besides ther outlaw who is crippled in both arms.

"This gent ridin' with me I don't know by name, or I'd introdooce yer."

Thus urged, the man riding on the box said:

"My name is Ray, sir, Henry Ray."

"Oh, yes, I remember hearing your pards call yer by thet name now. These gents, Mr. Ray, is Surgeon Powell o' ther cavalry, and Buffalo Bill, chief of scouts, and they is among the best men thet ever is seen in these pards."

All bowed at the introduction, and the scouts kept up with the coach until it reached the fort.

The man who had given his name as Ray was one who possessed the look of one to be depended on in time of need.

He was well-built, quick of action, and had a dark, piercing eye that was most penetrating.

The other two passengers were heavily-bearded men, such as might be found anywhere on the frontier.

As Henry Ray dismounted from the box he turned to Surgeon Powell, who had just gotten off of his horse, and said:

"You are an officer at the fort, I believe, sir?"

"Yes, the surgeon of the post."



"I would like to see the commandant, sir, Colonel Wood."

"I will conduct you to him if you wish," said the surgeon, who, with the scout, was going to headquarters to report their return.

Colonel Wood was seated upon the piazza of his headquarters smoking an after-dinner cigar, and was alone when the party arrived, for the two other passengers had come along also, Henry Ray remarking that they were friends of his.

"Ah, Powell, glad to see you back again, and you, too, Cody, for after getting word that you had gone off on the trail of a dream I began to fear that, after all, the redskins might have gotten hold of Buffalo Bill."

"No, sir, the redskins did not catch him, for we have not seen an Indian; but, strange to say, colonel, my dream was not all a dream, after all, for I found him in a very tight place.

"But I'll explain later, as this gentleman, whom Horseshoe Hal introduced as Mr. Ray, for he and his comrades came in on the coach, desires to see you, sir."

The colonel turned at once to the strangers, and said, addressing the leader of the three:

"How can I serve you, Mr. Ray?"

"I desire, sir, to present my card and this letter, given me by General S——," said Ray, and he handed over a card and letter.

The letter bore the official stamp of the military headquarters at Chicago, and was as follows:

"Sir: A question having arisen between the civil and military authorities, regarding the right for you to hold and try the prisoner now in your keeping, known as Silk Lasso Sam, the outlaw chief, and now under sentence of death, I have consulted the Attorney-General through the Secretary of War, and the result is that you are hereby ordered to turn over to Detective Henry Ray the said prisoner."

When Horseshoe Hal's coach went East the next day it carried as passengers Henry Ray, and the outlaw chief, Silk Lasso Sam, the brother of Bonnie Bess.

## CHAPTER CXL.

### THE SECRET REVEALED.

Horseshoe Hal, always an important personage in the eyes of many, was particularly so on the morning of his departure for the East with no less a person as a passenger than Silk Lasso Sam.

He had told over and over again the story of his last runs out, and had brought with him, as evidence of Miss Ardell's deadly shooting, the outlaw wounded in both arms, and who had been placed under guard in the hospital.

Now he was to go out with Silk Lasso Sam and the three officers.

The coach rattled up to its starting place, the mail was put aboard and instructions given, and the three detectives stood ready to receive their prisoner.

Presently a squad of soldiers was seen approaching, and in their midst was the tall form of the outlaw chief.

He walked upright with soldierly step, and looked about him as he halted with calm indifference.

A very large crowd had gathered to see him off, and as the guard halted they were anxious to get a look at his face.

The officer in charge after coming to a halt asked: "Is Mr. Ray, the detective, here?"

Henry Ray stepped forward and said:

"I am Detective Ray, sir."

"I have orders to surrender into your keeping this prisoner, known as Silk Lasso Sam."

"I am ready to receive him, sir."

"Then please sign this receipt."

The officer drew from his belt a paper which the detective carefully read, and stepping into the stage office, he signed it.

"Thank you, sir."

"The prisoner is now in your charge," and ordering the sergeant to march the guard back to the guard-house, the officer turned upon his heel and walked leisurely away, as though there was no more interest in the case for him.

The detective ordered the prisoner to enter the coach, assisting him, as both his hands and feet were manacled, the others followed, and Henry Ray called out:

"All ready, driver."

"Then she goes."

The whip cracked, and the team went rapidly away down the hill toward the stockade gate.

Soon after the stage rolled out of sight in the distance, and Horseshoe Hal, having given the idea to the uninitiated in stage travel that he kept up that speed all the way, now drew the horses down to a slow pace for the long drive ahead.



Hardly had the coach disappeared when Buffalo Bill walked up to headquarters.

The colonel, with a relieved look upon his face, sat upon the piazza talking with Captain Carr.

"Ah, Cody, any news?" asked the colonel.

"Not any, sir, but I came to ask leave to go on a trail for a few days."

"Any definite point in view, Cody?"

"Well, no, colonel, only I thought I would like to follow Horseshoe Hal's coach."

"You have some motive for asking this, Cody?"

"Yes, sir."

"Out with it."

"The coach carried a very valuable freight, sir, in the person of Silk Lasso Sam."

"Yes, and you think that he may escape?"

"Well, sir, it has been rumored about that he was to go by this coach, and it may be that an attempt at rescue might be made."

"Impossible!"

"Why impossible, sir?"

"He is well guarded by three determined men."

"Still, sir, Silk Lasso Sam has many friends, and those who sought to curry favor with him might attempt a rescue."

"There is something in this."

"There is much in it, I should say, colonel, and if you wish, I will take some troopers and escort the coach past the danger line," Captain Carr said.

"It would be a hard ride for the troops to overtake the coach now, Captain Carr, and Cody is ready, I see, for the trail, so he can go."

"I will start at once, sir," was the scout's reply, and he saluted and walked rapidly back to his quarters.

Anticipating that the colonel would grant his request for him to follow the coach, Buffalo Bill had already prepared for his going, and his horse awaited him, the very best animal that he had, and he was never known to have an inferior one.

Ten minutes after his request was granted, the scout was riding out of the stockade, and once out of sight of the fort, went on at a very rapid pace, for the coach had all of ten miles the start of him.

Buffalo Bill's long life upon the border had made him watchful, cautious, nervy and cunning.

He had all the attributes to make a great borderman, and he could bring into play his every talent and energy when it was needed.

He had a suspicion that constantly grew upon him that there might be a rescue of the prisoner attempted.

Did not Bonnie Bess know something, he wondered, of this intended requisition.

Might she not meet the detectives on the way with their prisoner, and with unlimited money at her command gain by strategy and bribery what she could not do by force?

So argued the scout, and that was why he wished to go on the trail of the coach.

He rode at a lively rate until out of sight of the fort.

Then he dismounted, gave his horse a drink of water at a stream, tightened his saddle girths, and looking at his watch, said:

"Just two hours since he left."

"That means, as he drives, all of twelve miles from this point."

"I should overtake him about Deep Brook or a little beyond, only I do not wish to get close enough to be seen by them."

Mounting then, he put his horse into a swinging canter and held him to it for miles, when he reached the country where the hills grew steep and long.

Two hours after leaving the fort he halted for a short rest and said:

"The coach is about six miles ahead now, I take it, if Hal is on schedule time."

Again he resumed his way, and for another long time held on until he descended into Deep Brook.

Just as he halted his horse for water, confident that the coach could not be very far from him then, his eyes fell upon the trail beyond.

There was something in it which caught his eye.

It was a revolver.

He spurred toward it, dismounted and cried:

"It's Hal's revolver."

He looked about him and saw tracks of horses, blood stains, footprints, and the evidence of a struggle.

Instantly he leaped into his saddle, and his horse was sent flying on up the hill.

A mile ahead he caught sight of the coach, and it was driving rapidly.

He had no time to lose in overtaking it, so drawing his revolver he fired several shots.

The sound reached the ears of Horseshoe Hal, who glanced back, saw who it was, and wheeling his team



in a broad space of the trail, drove back to meet the scout with all speed.

He soon drew rein, and the scout dashed up and leaped from his horse.

"Ho, Hal, what is the matter?" called out Buffalo Bill.

"Matter enough, Bill, for the detectives and the prisoner is gone."

"Gone where?"

"Don't know."

"Why don't you know?" angrily said the scout.

In answer, Horseshoe Hal turned the back of his head and said:

"See here, Bill."

"It's a wound."

"It's something."

"My poor fellow, what has happened?"

"Durned if I know, for I'm kinder dazed-like."

"Tell me what you can."

"I will."

"You were held up?"

"I don't know," and the driver passed his hand across his head and said:

"It pains me, Bill."

"Come, Hal, get down from your box, for there is a brook, and let me dress that wound, for I have a needle and thread and can stitch it up for you, for it is an ugly-looking gash. Then tell me all you can remember."

The driver obeyed without a word, allowing the scout to take the stitches in the wound without flinching and fixed his handkerchief over it, wet with arnica, which Buffalo Bill always had with him.

"It feels better now, Bill, thankee."

"Oh, you'll come round all right soon," and the scout said no more, for he did not wish to hurry the driver and perhaps fret him in the condition in which he then was.

After a few minutes of silence Hal said:

"I think it was a rock, Bill."

"What was?"

"That struck me."

"Ah! and it was at Deep Brook?"

"Yes, the horses were drinkin' thar, when suddenly came a blow that knocked me clear off the box, for I was down on the ground just out of the stream when I came round.

"The team was standing near me just waitin' like

humans for me ter come round, and when I tried to git up, I found I was uncommon dizzy.

"But I did git up at last, and then I see thiet ail was gone, and I scrambled up to my box as best I could, and come on.

"I don't know no more about it then you does, Bill, only the law officers and the prisoner was gone when I come round to my senses, and I got on the box and drove on."

"Well, you can make it all right now, Hal, as I shall take this trail," and leaping upon his horse Buffalo Bill began to search around and soon struck the trail of five horses.

He followed it at a swift gallop, and just as night came on he caught sight of a campfire ahead.

Dismounting, he crept near to the fire and saw a group of persons.

One was Miss Ardell, known in the mining camps of Red Pocket as Bonnie Bess.

Another was the freed prisoner, the unworthy brother, for whom she had risked so much, and the others were Detective Ray and his men.

What was being said Buffalo Bill distinctly heard, and Bonnie Bess was speaking.

"Now I must return to Red Pocket, Sam, and as you are now a free man, and I have well supplied you with funds, I beg you to keep your word to me, and, going far from here, to lead a different life.

"I have plotted as I did to save you, and I am very sorry that Horseshoe Hal was struck a severe blow with a revolver, for he may have been badly hurt.

"I did not intend that there should be any bloodshed when I sent Deadshot Dick to get these official papers and employed you, Ray, and your man to act as detective officers.

"I have paid you your price, Ray, and I advise you to get out of this country with all haste, for I shall soon settle up my business at Red Pocket and go to join the man I love, Deadshot Dick, and whom I am to marry.

"Brother, good-by—we shall never meet again."

She stepped to the side of her brother as she spoke, and just then Henry Ray held a revolver upon them and cried:

"Men, let us get all the gold while we are about it."

His revolver was fired as he uttered the words, and Silk Lasso Sam dropped dead in his tracks.



It was the traitor's last act, for out of the darkness flashed Buffalo Bill's revolver, and just in time to save the life of Bonnie Bess, and down went Henry Ray.

His comrades fired at random and sprang to cover, but one fell, shot by the girl, who had regained her presence of mind, while Buffalo Bill brought down the other. Then the scout appeared upon the scene.

"Three tongues are silenced. Buffalo Bill, I owe you my life, and though my poor brother is dead, he did not die on the gallows."

"Bonnie Bess, I alone know your plot to save your brother, and the secret I will only tell after you have gone far from here, for I heard all that you said a while since.

"You met your brother with those horses at Deep Brook and saved him from the gallows.

"Fortunately, Horseshoe Hal is not badly hurt; but I wish you to go back to Red Pocket, settle up your affairs there, and go from this country, and may you and Dick Dean be happy, is my wish.

"The money you gave these men and your brother is honestly yours, so take it and I will ride to the nearest stage station, have Horseshoe Hal come by here on his return run, and carry these bodies to the fort for burial.

"Hal will tell his story, and it will be known that the rescuers of your brother were members of his band, and I will report my finding of them, and the fight that ended the game, while you need not be known in the affair."

"Buffalo Bill, I will do as you say, and I take your advice, and believe me, as long as I live I will be your friend.

"I came here to Red Pocket to redeem my poor brother from his evil life, and I failed.

"Bury him decently, and God bless you."

She knelt by the body of Lasso Sam, kissed the face of the wicked one she had devotedly loved, sprang into her saddle, and held forth her hand when Buffalo Bill said:

"Here is your money I took from the bodies for you."

"Thank you, I had forgotten it. Heaven bless you," and she rode rapidly away in the darkness, Buffalo Bill soon after following on his way to the stage station.

The next morning on his back run, Horseshoe Hal got the court's message, left with the stage station stockman, and drove by the lone camp where Buffalo Bill waited as guard for the dead.

The bodies were put into the coach, which arrived without adventure at the fort, and Hal reported the attack upon him by the pretended detectives.

Then, to Colonel Wood and Surgeon Powell alone, Buffalo Bill made his report as it truthfully was.

"Let her go in peace," said the colonel, "as no one was killed save the outlaw chief and his rescuers, the ones who deserved death."

Months after, Buffalo Bill received a letter from England which said simply:

"We are living here and are happy. God bless you.  
"DICK and BESS."

And after the sudden departure of Bonnie Bess, Red Pocket became the worst place on the frontier, while to-day it remains but a memory in the eventful life of Buffalo Bill.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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## EDITORIAL.

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Our readers have noticed that from No. 20 we have used the same general title for this series, which will be continued for about thirteen issues, when a new title will be used for another series of "Buffalo Bill" stories equally absorbing; and this plan will be continued indefinitely. We believe our readers will welcome this change as an improvement, since we can thus avoid any duplicates in titles or the use of any title bearing a similarity to others. Of course each issue will be numbered differently in rotation, as heretofore, and also bear upon its cover a different picture illustrating some important incident in the story which clearly distinguishes one issue from another.

The stories are really issued in the same manner as heretofore, except that one title is used for a number of them.



# PRIZE ANECDOTE DEPARTMENT.

Boys, look on page 32 and see the announcement of the new contest. We propose to make this contest the most successful and far-reaching ever conducted. It rests with you to do it, but we know that you can, because the first contest along the same lines has been a tremendous success.

We still have hosts of articles sent in in connection with the contest just closed, and we will try to publish all the best ones before you send in your new stories. Here are some of those received this week.

## Out All Night on a Ledge.

(By William Murray, Trinidad, Col.)

One day, about two summers ago, I was out hunting, and I climbed a very steep ledge of rock. On the way down I stepped on a large rock, which was displaced, and I fell, spraining my ankle severely. When I started to get up I found that I could not walk, let alone get down.

I soon found out that I would have to stay up there all night, unless aid came soon, for the sun was very low, and night would soon be on. I made myself as comfortable as possible, and sat there thinking. I soon fell asleep, and when I awoke the stars were shining brightly, and the moon would soon be up.

While I sat there cold, and shivering, I happened to look down below me, and to my horror, I saw two shining eyes looking at me. My gun lay some distance from me, but I wanted to find out what it was that was watching me so close. I lit a match, but it did not shed enough light.

A sudden thought came to me, and I took the lead out of two or more shells and emptied the powder out, and then touched a match to it, when it had flared up I made the animal out to be a wildcat.

I dragged myself over to my gun, and just looked around in time, for the wildcat was creeping upon me. I threw a shell into the chamber, and took a hasty aim at the cat's eye, and fired. When I looked again the wildcat was gone. Well, to make my story short, I stayed up there all night, and in the morning hailed a wood cutter, and by his help got down. I must have only wounded the wildcat for we saw blood on the rocks, but no cat.

## A Fearful Accident.

(By Ira J. Patterson, Fetterman, Pa.)

One Saturday afternoon I loaded an old shotgun, and with a dog started quail hunting in a woods more than half a mile from home. I spied a quail on the fence, and fetched it. The explosion of the gun unexpectedly started a flock of quail. At the sight of so many birds I got excited and started in pursuit of them, and at the same time started hurriedly to reload the gun, so that I would have two more shots at them.

I was ramming the powder home when I stumbled and in some unaccountable manner I discharged the other barrel of the gun.

The thumb and all the fingers of my right hand ex-

cept the index finger were blown off at the first and second joints, and the shot was scattered all over my face, and powder filled my eyes.

I was rendered unconscious. Some time later I was brought back to my senses by my dog pinching various parts of my body with his teeth, and I awoke to find my face bathed in blood from a score of shot wounds. And this, with the blood flowing from my injured hand made me so weak that I felt unable to rise, and I tried to drive the dog off, but the animal refused to budge, and he whined piteously, while I cried out for help.

But there was not a soul in hearing distance. Being unable to get rid of the animal, which by this time had become very annoying, I staggered to my feet.

I could not see, but the dog guided me by keeping against my legs, first on one side and then on the other, and when I was in danger the dog ran in front of me. Even with the watchfulness of the dog, I fell half-a-dozen times.

I was dizzy and everything was moving rapidly about, and I felt like lying where I fell, but the dog tormented me until I again started homeward. When within a few yards of the house, I, as if by instinct, found my way to a fallen tree, and there sat, while the dog ran into the house yelping and so notifying my folks. They came out and led me into the house where I received medical attention.

## A Desperate Struggle in the Water.

(By A. J. Bauer, Yorktown, Ind.)

In the year 1898 my Uncle John and I were camping in Arizona on a low plain of high prairie grass near the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River, about ten miles below where the Little Colorado River flows into the Colorado. In this river I learned to swim and dive, my uncle being a great swimmer and skilled in diving. He often swam the river with me on his back, when he went to see to his traps that were set for a bear or deer. One morning early before daylight he wakened me to get up and help him steer our canoe across the swift current of the river. I arose and went down to the shore and got into the canoe where my uncle already had seated himself. When all was ready, we started across. Before we had crossed the center of the stream a crash came and the canoe was broken into a thousand pieces, and I was dropped into the river. I sank to the bottom, over twenty-five feet. When I came to the surface of the water I could see nothing, for the sun had not yet crept up above the horizon. I swam with all my might for the



shore, but the current being swift, I could not make much headway. It took all my strength to get out of it, and at last I could hardly stay on top of the water. Then I sank. When I came to the top again I screamed with all my might for help, but got no answer, and then I began again to sink. I thought I was lost. As I was sinking I spied a dark object floating down stream near me. I reached for it and grasped it. It was a long pine tree that had been picked up by the flood of the river.

This tree was probably what shattered our canoe to pieces. With this I managed to get ashore safely, and when daylight came I was many miles from home and on the opposite side of the stream, so I wandered up the shore till I saw my uncle's cabin opposite.

I called across, but receiving no answer, I sat down on the shore, for I was tired and weary of my hard struggle and long walk. Noon passed and no one appeared on the other shore. Night drew near and the sun was sinking. I could hear far back in the forest the howling of wolves, when suddenly a canoe appeared gliding along the other shore near my uncle's cabin. I called across and an answer came, asking who it was. I called back my name and the canoe pulled across the swift current to the shore. An Indian was at the paddle and my Uncle John was in the stern of the canoe. I was soon in the canoe and carried across to the old log cabin of my uncle, where I ate a hearty supper, for I was nearly famished.

### A Narrow Escape.

(By Edward Franklyn, New Haven, Conn.)

One of the most thrilling experiences I have ever been in occurred in Northampton, Mass., last February. As I was riding down Elm street on my bicycle I saw a crowd of people gathered near an electric light pole. There was quite an open space where they had placed a lantern. I unsuspectingly rode toward this place, jumped off of my wheel and proceeded to enter this space to find out what was the trouble. I had no sooner jumped off my wheel and started forward when I heard a woman shriek and a number of men cried out to me to look out. I had not the slightest idea what was the matter, but some natural impulse made me jump. It was lucky for me that I did, for I had just cleared a live wire, that was sputtering on the ground.

The linemen who came to repair the break said that it was fortunate for me that I had jumped when I did or I would have been instantly killed, because the wire contained 1,700 volts.

### Through the Ice.

(By Lewis Johnston, Lockport, Ill.)

I am now thirteen, but at the time of my story I was but eight years old. I wanted to go skating and my mother said I could go over to my aunt's and stay all day. I started over, but met some boys, who asked my brother and me to skate over to the red mill, which was about four and one-half miles from our house. I went, and we had a fine time skating around. When we first got there we built a fire. After we had been there about an hour we started home, each of us taking a long stick. After we had gone about a mile toward home we stopped

at an old barn to tighten our skates. The men had been cutting ice along there, and the ice along the bank was about five feet wide and had a slant. Well, I tightened my skates and stood up with my back toward the water. In a little while a wind came up and blew me into the water. I did not know how to swim and the only thing that kept me from sinking was my reefer. I yelled to the boys and they looked up to see me slowly sinking and floating away from the shore. They told me to paddle with my hands. In the meantime they had to hold my brother, who could not swim, but who was trying to jump in after me. I slowly worked my way in till I reached the sticks which the boys held out for me to take hold of. They pulled me in and made me run almost all the way home. My mother washed me in warm water and wrapped me up in blankets and told me to go to bed, and the next morning I was all right. I never even caught cold.

### Caught in a Cave-in.

(By Arthur Garey, Michigan City, Ind.)

This accident happened on June 24, 1896. My father and I and five men were building a gravel road. We drew the gravel from a gravel pit. We had shoveled in under a bank in the pit about the length of a shovel, and there were two wagons in there loading up.

I said they had better watch out or the bank would cave in. But we kept on shoveling. All at once, the bank cracked and before we could get out of the way down it came.

One of the men, named Charlie, was buried out of sight, my father up to his knees, I up to my waist, and the others were buried up to their necks. Charlie gave a smothered yell, and I uncovered him with my hands, and then with the shovel. My father dug out the rest. None was hurt except Charlie and a man named Perry. Perry had his leg broken below the knee, and Charlie had his hand cut in three places by the wagon tire, and had three ribs broken by a stone that weighed about 500 pounds.

This same stone just missed my head and smashed the front wagon wheel.

### Caught in a Cyclone.

(By Harry C. Euyard, Henderson, Ky.)

While traveling through Hill County, Texas, I spent the night with a farmer who lived in a two-story frame house. During the night a wind storm came up which rapidly developed into a regular Texas cyclone.

The family consisted of the husband, wife, two children and a young lady, sister of the lady of the house. The wind was just awful, the house rocked like a boat and the ladies and children became so badly frightened it was all the man of the house and I could do to quiet them and keep them from rushing out doors.

I was standing near the center of the room talking to the young lady, holding her by each arm, when the cyclone struck the house with a resounding whack, and for a few moments I knew nothing.

The last I remember hearing was an awful tearing, breaking and rending of the timbers of the building. When I regained consciousness, we, the young lady and



I, were lying about thirty or forty yards from the house—or rather, from where it was—we were lying on our sides and I still held her by the arms, just as we stood in the center of the room.

We both came to at about the same time, and neither was hurt save a few bruises.

But the strange thing about it was we must have been blown through where the chimney stood. Neither the man nor his wife was hurt. But one of the children, a lovely little girl, was found some days after in the top of a live oak tree several miles from her home. Of course, the poor little thing was dead.

My horse was picked up and carried several hundred yards and jammed down between two trees growing so close together that his body could not touch the ground. When found he was just alive, but he was so badly injured and suffering so terribly I had him shot to get him out of his misery.

Not a particle of the house was left on the spot where it stood, but it was scattered all over the vicinity for miles.

### An Accident on a Ferris Wheel.

(By Douglas Hynes, Butte City, Montana.)

It was during the summer of 1894 that a corporation was formed in Butte, Montana, which erected a large Ferris Wheel. The wheel was perhaps two hundred feet high and was run by electricity. Determined to ride on this, I told a neighbor's boy to go in the house and see if he could get any money. He took five dollars from his mother's purse, and we set off for the wheel, determined not to come home until our money was gone.

As the wheel was condemned by the building inspector, nobody but children rode in it, so I got in one of the boxes, and had ridden perhaps half an hour when the dynamo that ran it became detached from the wires.

There I was about two hundred feet in the air on top of a Ferris Wheel. I climbed out of the box and began climbing down the frame. After I got about half-way down the wheel started to go around and I nearly fell off. I screamed, and the watchman stopped the wheel and let me off. I was afraid to go home on account of the stolen five dollars, and remained away from home for about a week, when my father caught me and taught me that discretion is the better part of valor. A few days afterward my mother found out that we had taken the five dollars, and she took me in a room, and it was there that I learned that the way of the transgressor is hard.

### Struck by the Empire State Express.

(By Owen F. Cook, New York City.)

One day last summer when I was visiting Peekskill, a town on the Hudson River, I had a very narrow escape, which nearly cost me my life.

I had been there about three weeks visiting my cousins. On the night before my adventure happened, my sister said to me:

"Now, Owen, you had better come home with me to-night."

I said "no."

That was on a Friday night. She went home that night and I stayed up.

In the night I went down to my cousin's store, and sat down by the fire. After a while my cousin's helper came in and asked me if I could take a ride down to the dock to bring some soda water to the Chrystenah, a boat, running between New York and Peekskill.

I got on the wagon. To get to this dock, we had to cross the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad. When we came to the railroad the gates were down. After the train passed, the gates were raised and we were told to go on. When we reached the last track I happened to look around and there was a train coming at a fierce rate.

My hair stood on ends. The train struck the back part of the wagon and I was knocked senseless. I just had enough sense to see my cousin's helper being dragged along by the horse.

When I came to I gazed around at the wreck of the wagon and my cousin was gazing into my face. They took me up to the house, and I found I had a compound fracture of the leg between the ankle and the knee; those were all the injuries I received:

They flagged the train at a station further up the road, and the next morning I found out it was the Empire State express that struck me, going at a rate of sixty miles an hour. It is otherwise known as the "999."

By November 15, 1900, I was home in the city. Now I race, ride a wheel, play football and jump and I never feel the injury to my leg at all.

### How it Feels to Be Drowning.

(By Frank C. Kelly, Wheeling, W. Va.)

The story I am about to tell happened during August, 1900. There is a stream emptying into the Ohio River at this place called Wheeling Creek. This creek is full of deep holes, in which many people have lost their lives. The boys of this town go to various places during hot weather to swim or try to. Now, I had never learned to swim until this summer, when I had gotten confidence enough to try. Well, I tried and learned to swim about ten feet, or enough to be too confident. One hot Monday I went out the creek with a friend named John Dunn.

John and I have been to the creek many times together, and he can swim like a fish. Well, I had a good swim in shallow water by myself while he went a half mile below me to a place called Berries' hole, the worst place in the creek.

Becoming tired of my solitude, I went below, and undressing, went in just above the place. I had a habit of wading out to where the water came to my shoulders, then I would swim toward shore. This I repeated several times, until, becoming tired I concluded to have one more and quit. This time I went out until the water came to my chin. I turned toward shore, but just then my feet slipped off the stone I was standing on, and I went down in about seven feet of water.

I tried to swim out, but somehow my feet would not come to the surface.

After I had gone down the third time I began to be alarmed, and when I came up each time I tried to call for help, but only got a barrel of water in my mouth, more or less.



There was a large crowd there, and I knew if I could holloa once I would be all right, but I couldn't.

After I had gone down the third time I began to feel good and ceased to struggle. I have read many times that drowning persons live their lives over in a few seconds, but I had no thought of anything but my mother, and I wondered if it would kill her, otherwise I wouldn't have cared.

As I was going down the sixth time my friend John called out, "Save that boy, he can't swim," and he dove after me, as did two men. This would have been my last trip to the surface, as I was unconscious. The next thing I knew I was lying on the bank feeling very sick at my stomach.

As it turned out afterward, the crowd had been watching me all the time thinking I was fooling.

### Attacked by Tramps.

(By William Roth, New York City.)

While I was visiting my cousin last vacation in Pater-son, N. Y., something terrible occurred. One day my cousin and I went fishing. We took our poles and started along the railroad track. When we were about a mile and a half from the village two tramps suddenly sprang out from their hiding-place and told us to stand still. We were so scared that we knew not what to do, for we had no weapon except our poles. While one tramp had a revolver and the other had a club.

The one with the club came walking toward us with some rope in his hands.

Quick as a flash, I threw my pole at him, which caught him between his legs. He tripped and fell along the side of the track.

Quickly I turned around and ran as fast as my legs could carry me, and my cousin ran alongside of me.

As we turned around a curve I took a glance to see if any of them were pursuing us. Sure enough, I saw the tramp with the revolver pursuing us. When he could not gain on us he fired his revolver, and the bullet whizzed past my face and hit a log not ten feet away from me. Then I took another glance and saw that nobody was pursuing us, so we slackened our speed and walked home.

I had a very narrow escape of being shot, and told my cousin that I would not go fishing in that direction any more.

### A Midnight Thief.

(By Walter Kelley, Hopkins, Minn.)

One summer afternoon as I was going home from school with my friend Arthur he told me his mother was going to sit up with a sick girl, and asked me to sleep with him, for he would be alone, as his father, who was a traveling man, was not at home. Arthur was a large boy of sixteen, while I at that time was thirteen. After asking my parents, who consented, I went with Arthur to his home, which was a short distance from the village of Hopkins.

We spent the evening in playing games and popping corn, and told stories. Arthur liked to scare me by telling ghost stories. We sat up till it was nearly ten o'clock, and when Arthur wound the clock we retired.

The summer before Arthur had been working for his

uncle, who lived two miles from Hopkins and had earned forty-five dollars. Arthur kept this money in one of the drawers of his washstand. He expected to work the next vacation and earn enough money to buy a pony and a rifle.

We went to bed and fell asleep. I was awakened by a creaking of a window below.

I awakened Arthur, and he said he had locked all the doors, but not the windows. Soon we heard light footsteps in the room below. He then heard the person coming softly upstairs, carrying a dark lantern. He crept into our bedroom on his hands and knees. We lay very still and watched, and I was very much frightened.

He then began to open one of the drawers in the stand where Arthur had his money, and opened the drawer where the money was.

Arthur took from under his pillow a revolver and said:

"Get out of there or I'll shoot you full of holes."

The man turned his head and saw Arthur sitting on the bed with the revolver ready to shoot. He got up without taking the lantern, ran down the stairs and out of the house.

When Arthur saw the lantern he said he had seen Jim White with a lantern very much like that once when he was out fishing.

We did not sleep any more that night, and in the morning they heard that Jim White had left home the night before and had not been seen since.

### A Perilous Adventure.

(By S. D. Harold Pope, Victoria, B. C.)

One night last year I asked two boys to come fishing with me the next day, and they said they would.

Early in the morning we started along the railway track, and continued along it for two miles, when we turned up a road leading to the mountains. After walking for an hour, we came to a small stream, where we started to fish.

The stream seemed alive with fish and in a few minutes we each had a string of fine fish. Just then, something happened.

Jack Scratton was trying to land a large trout, when his foot slipped and he went "splash" into the water. He was soon ashore and after we had made a fire he managed to dry his clothes. We were beginning to feel hungry so we opened our lunch baskets.

After we had finished our lunch we started out to Pike Lake, which was about two miles further on. While we were walking along the road, we saw the footmarks of some animal and I suggested that we follow them up, which we did.

We were passing under a large tree, which had low, thick branches, when I saw something hurtling through the air toward me. I had only time to throw myself forward when it struck me full on my head, knocking me senseless. When I came to, I saw a man and my two companions bending over me. I tried to rise, but the pain was too great, for there was a gash on the back of my head where a panther had struck me. My companions told me that the panther was shot by the man. He had heard the shouts of my companions and had hurried up to them. I have often thanked him for saving my life.



# BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1—Buffalo Bill; No. 2—Kit Carson; No. 3—Texas Jack; No. 4—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6—David Crockett; No. 7—General Sam Houston; Nos. 8 and 9—Lewis Wetzel; Nos. 10 and 11—Capt. John Smith.

## No. 12.—Wild Bill.

(JAMES B. HIKOK.)

### THE CELEBRATED BORDER DEAD SHOT.

James Butler Hikok was his full name, and yet he was known in Borderland as "Wild Bill."

Born in a cabin in Illinois, on the banks of Vermilion Creek, in 1837, Wild Bill became one of the most noted characters in frontier life, and won a name that will live in the history of the Wild West as well as in sketch, poem and novel.

In his earlier years, when just old enough to carry a rifle, as a boy he won fame as a daring rider, a dead shot, bold swimmer and a nature quiet in danger and who knew no fear.

He had a passion for firearms and the skill that was his he had reduced to a science long before he was of age.

His father, a pioneer settler, was too busy with the work on his house to answer the pleadings of Jim, for he was so called then, for a rifle, pony and pistol, which the boy considered the means of education for a border youth, and so the young fellow determined to get his weapons and horse in his own way.

The State had offered a premium for the scalps of wolves, then very troublesome, and Jim Hikok made a trap and pen in which to catch the animals.

He built a pen within a pen, and set his bait, the latter being his pet pig, which, however, the boy did not intend should become wolf food, for he was protected, but was a means to an end.

Piggy was the decoy, and when the trap was set the boy went off to await the result.

Piggy set up such a yell at being left alone, that Jim's heart melted, and he was tempted to use the family cat as bait, and returning for the pig he found that the trap had been sprung and the pig was wild with fear over the game his squeals had caught.

Three wolves were in the pen, and Jim had arranged his method of slaying them, having fastened a well-sharpened bowie knife upon the end of a long pole.

The wolves were speared to death, and piggy, being safe, the boy decided that it was his squeal that was needed to entice the wolves, and the cat escaped a fright, if no more.

The boy was merciful, and would not leave the pig in the trap at night, but by day he was kept as a decoy,

and when he saw a wolf nosing round he set up a squeal, other wolves hastened to the spot, and within a few days Jim had many scalps.

Whether the pig got on to the boy's racket and enjoyed it, Jim thought that he did, and was happy, for his cash for scalps was increasing rapidly, and he at last told his father of his plan to catch wolves.

Mr. Hikok was much pleased at the boy's clever work, and it was not long before Jim got money enough from his scalps to buy his pony, rifle, revolver and a bowie knife, and piggy was relieved from duty as a wolf catcher, and considering himself prepared for work, the young adventurer set about wolf-hunting in a more manly way.

On one occasion, when just in his teens, Jim was employed to aid in driving a herd of cattle, and a stop for the night was made by the drovers at a small tavern, the landlord of which had had some trouble with Mr. Hikok.

While there a huge bear had stolen the little child of the tavern keeper and ran to the woods with it.

Jim had been treated so badly by the man and his wife that he had gone to the woods to build for himself a brush shelter in which to sleep, and he beheld the bear and its little victim go by.

He had with him only his pistols, and knife, but he gave chase, and gained on the large brute, which carried the child by its clothing.

Sure of his deadly aim, as he came near, Jim halted and fired, and with the result he intended, for he wounded the bear, which halted and turned, still holding the baby.

But another well-aimed shot caused the bear to drop the screaming child and rush upon the boy.

Jim Hikok stood his ground and again fired, and the bear fell, but rose quickly and savagely attacked the boy, who with the wonderful nerve that stood him in need in after years, he took sure aim and sent a bullet between the eyes of Bruin.

Blinded with blood, frenzied with rage and pain, the brute tried to get hold of his boy foe, who, again loading his pistols, while he eluded the bear, gave their contents once more at close range and ended the desper-



ate fight, just as the tavern keeper and the men appeared, having witnessed the battle.

The baby was scratched, and scared badly, but not much hurt, and the landlord cried as he told Jim that he had been in the wrong in quarreling with him, and asked to be forgiven.

"It's all right, for I don't mind it if you don't," said Jim, and he had to stand for a good hugging and kissing from the mother of the baby, who called him a great hero, and named him the "Boy Bear Killer."

Soon after, Jim, mounted upon his fine pony, Beauty, and well armed and equipped for long trails, began to scout about the country in search of adventure.

These trips built up the boy's health, made him self-reliant and laid the foundation for his latter cleverness as a frontiersman.

When in his fifteenth year Jim Hikok took a position on the towpath of the Illinois and Michigan canal, and he became very popular with all, though always very quiet and with the dignity of old age.

But he found canal boating too tame for one of his nature, so, purchasing a complete outfit, he set out for the then wild lands of the Missouri and Kansas border.

He arrived there at the time of the first troubles over the admission of slavery into the State of Kansas, and Jim sought to enlist as a "Red-Leg Ranger," under Colonel Jim Lane, but was refused on account of his youth.

Some time after there was a shooting match, and Jim was determined to "ring in," so he laughed in a satirical way at the misses made, until a man turned upon him with:

"You has got a mean laugh, boy, as ef yer cud do better."

"I can, or I wouldn't laugh at your bad shooting," was the quiet reply.

"Waal, I'll pay ef you wins agin me, an' ef I wins I'll give yer ther taste o' a hick'ry switch."

"I'll go yer," and Jim beat the man shooting with both rifle and revolver, and the Red Legs gathered around and allowed the youth to pay his price and enter for the prizes, a horse, saddle and bridle for the first, a rifle and belt of revolvers and knife for the second, and a purse of a hundred dollars for the third.

Jim entered for all three and for the first prize it was "dead center" each time.

For the second prize it was the same, both with rifles, while the third prize was to be shot for with revolvers.

But weapons were all the same to Jim Hikok, and the youth made only "bull's-eye" shots.

Jim Hikok thus won the three prizes, which so angered the man who had first addressed him, that he said:

"Yer won, boy, but I'll tan yer good fer bein' so impudent," and he started to carry out his threat.

"If you strike me I shall kill you," said Jim.

"I'll just slit yer ears, same as they marks pigs," and the man, known as a desperado, drew his knife and sprang at the youth, to drop dead, a bullet between the eyes.

"Boy, what is your name?" asked Colonel Lane.

"I'm not particular what you call me, sir, so you allow me to join your command."

"You shall do so."

"We has got ter hev a Shanghai Bill, colonel, so give him ther name," cried a man.

And so it was Jim Hikok was lost in "Shanghai Bill," a name that clung to him until it gave way to that of Wild Bill.

During his service with the Red Legs, "Bill," as he was called, made a name for himself by his daring deeds.

He was seldom talkative, but polite, generous and a good friend, while always a champion of the weaker party.

On one of his scouts into Missouri he stopped at a farmhouse, an enemy, as he was too ill to go on.

They gave him shelter, and for weeks he lay ill, and in his delirium told who he was, the very man the Missourians wished to capture.

But the farmer bade him good-by, told him that he had come there sick, and Bill had said:

"I shall not forget you."

Some weeks after the farmer's son was captured with others who were sentenced to die in retaliation for Red Legs who had been shot.

"Spare this youth," Bill had urged, but had been refused.

"I'll pay ransom for him."

But still they refused.

"Then I say you shall not kill him," and Bill stepped before the young man.

One man at once raised his weapon to shoot the prisoner, but in a flash, he dropped dead, while Bill called out, a revolver in each hand:

"Who dares to touch this youth now?"

No one dared, and Bill led the youth away, when the one he had saved said:

"Bill, you do not know me, but I joined that band to find you, for I am not John, but Sophie, his twin sister, who nursed you when you were so ill."

Bill was astounded, but told the girl he did not love her and escorted her to her home and left her.

Leaving the Red Legs, Bill went further west and drove stage on the Santa Fe trail.

One adventure he met with is well worth relating.

There was one part of the trail all the drivers dreaded, as it was attested that it was haunted.

One night a spectre horseman appeared to Bill, who at once, contrary to the custom of all other drivers, went in chase, his horses at a run.

But the spook rider escaped, and on the next run Bill got a driver to take his place, while he followed on his fleet mare, Bonny Bess.

It was a bright moonlight night, and following close behind the coach Bill waited for the spectre rider to appear.

The driver gave the signal agreed upon, and Bill was off in pursuit.

"Halt!" shouted Bill: "Halt, or I fire!"

The "ghost" did not halt. Bill fired and the white horse fell.

"Well, you hung my husband, Ed. Kirk—do you intend to hang me, too?" asked the rider, half dazed by his fall.

"The Vigilantes hung Kirk. I was not on the trail then—you are a woman."



"Yes."

"Why are you playing ghost?"

"To scare those who hung my husband; but you were not scared."

"I am no fool; but you can go, for I never make war on a woman; only do not play ghost any more."

"I thank you, and I won't," and on his return trip the half-crazed and desolate woman stopped Bill's coach and started for her home in the East, keeping her promise to not again play the ghost to avenge her outlaw husband.

Later, while driving stage on a trail further west, though yet but a boy in years, but grown to be a tall, powerful, athletic fellow, Bill had some thrilling adventures with Indians.

Once he was "jumped" by a band of sixty redskins, and instantly he wheeled his six-horse team from the regular trail out upon the prairie, and went at full speed.

When they were well started he raised his rifle and brought down two; but it was a race for life with a killing pace for his horses.

With his reins under his feet, a revolver in each hand, and his horses flying along, Bill fought for the lives of his passengers and his own, and ran the gantlet until help came in the shape of a number of horsemen, who put the Indians to flight.

Bill had been twice wounded, several of his horses had been hit, three of the passengers killed and the coach looked like a pin cushion from the arrows sticking in it.

This escape with a coach in a running fight greatly added to Bill's fame.

Giving up stage driving, Bill took to pony express riding, and as a rider he had many narrow escapes from outlaws and redskins.

A band of Indians having run off a quantity of stock, Bill organized a force and went in pursuit, recaptured the horses and cut the band to pieces, the expedition being known as "Bill's Red Trail."

Leaving the pony express Bill was appointed brigade wagon master of the overland freighters, and one day, while riding well ahead, he was attacked by a large cinnamon bear with cubs.

His frightened horse reared and fell backward, and Bill had just time to turn and face the brute.

But he fired, and with true aim, though a first and second shot glanced on the hard skull, a third broke her leg, a fourth entered her body, and then it was a struggle with his knife.

Though Bill drove the knife home, his left arm was broken by a blow, his shoulder torn by her teeth, and gashes were cut in his breast with her claws, before he could drive his knife to her heart, just as he tripped and fell, with the cinnamon dropping dead upon him.

Thus he was found, and one of the drivers who had been a physician, took him in hand until the fort was reached, and he lay for months before he was able to feel himself again, when he took charge of a ranch where the stage horses were kept.

To his lone cabin one day, in the absence of his comrade, there came a number of mounted men, ten in number, who started to steal the horses.

This Bill could not stand, and he warned them off, but they drove him into his cabin, and there he stood at

bay behind the heavy table, upon which he placed his revolver, holding his rifle in hand.

Then the fight was on, the most desperate in frontier encounter, where one man fought ten desperadoes.

The leader fell dead in the doorway, and as others, firing as they came, rushed to the attack, Bill killed three men.

It was hand-to-hand then, give and take, Bill fighting with a revolver in one hand, a knife in the other.

Once Bill was knocked down with a revolver, but Bill killed the man that hit him, and shot, cut, bleeding he rose and continued the desperate battle.

The devil in Bill was roused, and with but two men remaining he drove them from the cabin, gave one a mortal wound, though he reached the settlement of Manhattan before he died, and he shot the last as he mounted his horse, though not wounding him badly, and he alone escaped, while the brave defender sank to the ground, with nine dead men near him.

The stage just then came up and in it, fortunately, was an army surgeon, who found a fracture of the frontal bone, three bad cuts in his chest, a knife thrust through his left arm, four bullet wounds in his body, two in his right leg, a slash on his cheek, cuts on his scalp, and other wounds which he called scratches.

This fight it was which gained for him the name of Wild Bill, and it was a year before he recovered from his wounds.

Another fight against odds Wild Bill had in a stock tender's cabin, when he surprised five men robbing the place, having killed the man.

Regardless of odds, Wild Bill attacked them, firing rapidly, killing three, and wounding the other two, though they escaped.

Challenged later to fight a duel with a gambler, Wild Bill accepted.

The gambler fired first, his bullet cutting through Wild Bill's hat, his bullet striking between the eyes.

It was while a wagon master that Bill Hikok first met William Cody, Buffalo Bill, then a mere lad, and to the death of the former they were devoted friends.

During the Civil War, Wild Bill was a scout and spy in the Union army, and a volume could be written upon his adventures, as he was captured, sentenced to death, escaped, and at the end of the struggle returned to the plains and became a noted Indian fighter.

With Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill became famous as a scout, and as Texas Jack joined them they made a wonderful trio.

The three later, on account of their deeds, came East together, as Buffalo Bill having offers to go on the stage, sent for his two pals of the plains to join him.

It was in the Black Hills that Wild Bill was shot in the back of the head by Jack McCall, one he had befriended, but who sought fame by killing the noted borderman.

He got it at the rope's end, for he was hanged for his crime.

In a romantic spot in the mountains, his rifle by his side, his belt of arms on, Wild Bill was buried, and on the stone that marks his grave are the words:

"Pard, we will meet again in the Happy Hunting Grounds."



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